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CALCULATED TO PROMOTE

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

VOL. III.

Παντα δοκιμαζετε.

PAUL.

..... *Si quid novisti rectius istis,*
Candidus imperti. .....

HORACE.

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THE

Theological Repoſitory.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

If the incloſed eſſay ſuit your purpoſe, it is much at your ſervice. It is hoped, that thoſe of your readers who are of a philoſophical turn of mind will not think it too *abſtruſe*, or that there is too much *refinement* in it. If it ſtand clear of theſe objections, it will be found to contain a preſumptive argument in favour of the ſcheme of revelation, which I have not ſeen illuſtrated by any writer, whoſe works have fallen into my hands. It is acknowledged not to be ſufficient to produce conviction in the minds of unbelievers; but it is hoped, that it may give ſome additional ſatisfaction to thoſe who are already the lovers and friends of revealed religion. I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.

CLEMENS.

An Eſſay on the Analogy there is between the Methods by which the Perfection and Happineſs of Men are promoted, according to the Diſpenſations of natural and revealed Religion.

THE perfection of intelligent beings conſiſts in *comprehenſion of mind*, or that principle whereby ideas of the paſt and the future mix with thoſe of the preſent, and excite one common ſenſation; in which the good and evil ſo perfectly coaleſce, and are ſo intimately united, that the *medium* only is perceived. Conſequently, if happineſs be apprehended to prevail, in that portion of time of which we have this perfect comprehenſion, and every part of which may be ſaid to be *preſent* to us, we are conſcious of pleaſure only in the contemplation of it, the pain being loſt, and abſorbed, together with ſo much pleaſure as was equivalent to it. By this means happineſs comes to be of a more ſtable nature; and it is leſs in the power of ſingle accidents to produce a ſenſe of miſery.

If we have any reaſon to think that our exiſtence will, upon the whole, be comfortable and happy; ſince (man being immortal) our happineſs muſt be infinite upon the whole, though it be limited and finite at any particular time, the thought is ſo great and ſo glorious, that the full apprehenſion of it muſt contribute ſtill more to overpower the ſenſe of any preſent evils, and give ſuch an intenſeneſs to all pleaſurable feelings, as cannot fail to make our preſent ſtate unſpeakably more eligible than it could otherwiſe have been.

Such

Such is the conſtitution of human nature, and ſuch are the influences to which we are expoſed in this world, that this comprehenſion of mind muſt neceſſarily be enlarged with the experience of every day. Infants are ſenſible of nothing but what paſſes in the preſent moment. The inſtant that the impreſſion of actual pain is removed, they are perfectly eaſy in mind, not being diſturbed either with the remembrance of the paſt, or the apprehenſion of the future. By degrees, ideas, which have frequently been preſent to the perceptive power at the ſame time, begin to be aſſociated; ſo that one of them cannot occur without introducing the other, and ſo making the perception complex. By this means *expectation* begins to awake in the infant mind; but ſtill, from the moment that, by the intervention of an aſſociated circumſtance, the idea of any pleaſure is conceived, the child is impatient till it be enjoyed. Indeed it is generally ſeveral months before children ſhow the leaſt ſign of patience in waiting for any thing. The moſt evident ſigns of preparing to give them food ſerve only to quicken their appetite, and their impatience to get it ſatisfied; nor are they eaſy, till the meat be actually in their mouths.

In this ſtate, therefore, or at our entrance upon life, we are influenced almoſt wholly by ſenſation, or the actual impreſſion of external objects upon our ſenſes. But when traces of theſe impreſſions, i. e. *ideas* are left in the ſenſorium, which may be excited by other ideas aſſociated with them, ſo that notices of things may be had without the preſence of real objects,

we

we are capable of being influenced by them, as well as by the objects themſelves. And ſince the ſtock of our ideas increaſes without limits, and is accumulating through the whole courſe of our lives, we muſt be continually more and more actuated by them; and there will be leſs occaſion for the preſence of external objects, either to rouſe us to action, or to give us the ſenſe of pleaſure or pain; that is, we grow more intellectual, and leſs ſenſual every day.

When our ſtock of ideas is become conſiderable, and, conſequently, their mutual aſſociations are pretty extenſive and intimate; if the circumſtances that have always been found to precede any gratification be perceived, the gratification itſelf is immediately anticipated; we look upon it as certain, and have a real enjoyment of it, though it be not preſent. In this caſe, when the gratification actually comes, it makes but little alteration in what we feel, and is but a ſmall addition to our previous happineſs; which now depends chiefly upon ideas, which are continually increaſing, and to which external ſenſations bear, every day, a leſs and leſs proportion.

The probable expectation of happineſs hath a ſimilar effect; and hence the great power of mere *hope* to leſſen the evils of life, and make us bear up under great difficulties and trials. If any pleaſure hath been abſolutely depended upon, for a long ſpace of time, the happineſs we have experienced in the frequent contemplation of it, may far exceed that of the enjoyment, which is ſingle and momentary, and, moreover, accompanied with the diſagreeable

idea

idea of its being ſo. For the ſame reaſon, the fear of evil may, in time, be far more diſtreſſing and grievous than the evil itſelf. The man who loſes a limb by a ſudden accident is to be envied, in compariſon of him who hath been ſentenced to that loſs, as a puniſhment, ſome months before the operation. In like manner, if two perſons be confined in priſon, and one of them be releaſed without any previous expectation of ſo agreeable an event, while the other knew that he was to be confined only for the ſame limited time; the former will feel more tumultuous joy upon the occaſion, but the latter will have had the idea of it preſent to his mind, during the whole time of his confinement, ſweetening all the bitterneſs of it, and will never have known the diſtreſs of uncertainty, or the agony of deſpair.

When ideas only are concerned, and not both ideas and ſenſations, the influence of hope and fear is much more diſtinctly perceived, and the nature of this comprehenſion of mind will be better underſtood by it. Inſtead, then, of putting a caſe in which we ourſelves are concerned, let us put the caſe of a wife, a child, or any other near relation, or friend, with whom we can truly ſympathize, taking part in all their joys and ſorrows. If we ſee them in priſon, and, after apprehending that their confinement would be for life, have private information that they will be releaſed, and placed in very agreeable circumſtances in a few days, weeks, or months; we can ſee them in the mean time, even though we are not allowed to communicate our intelligence to them, with joy

almoſt

almoſt unmixed; becauſe the future is realiſed, and the agreeableneſs of it heightened in our ideas by its contraſt with the preſent; which, being temporary, is overlooked by us, as nothing, and has not power to damp our ſatisfaction.

If my child be peeviſh and obſtinate, and I be ſenſible that pain and mortification will do him good, I can, without the help of much anger, have a kind of ſatisfaction in inflicting it, and have little or no ſympathy with what he ſuffers; though, for a time, he be in an agony of diſtreſs, and think very unkindly of me. On the other hand, if I foreſaw that he would loſe a limb in a few days, weeks, or months, I ſhould look upon him in the mean time with a moſt painful compaſſion, notwithſtanding he himſelf ſhould be ever ſo happy, and enjoy himſelf ever ſo much; nay, the want of apprehenſion and feeling in him, would ſharpen their painful effects in me.

The effect is nearly the ſame if, with reſpect to ourſelves, impreſſions from the external ſenſes be left out of the queſtion, and a caſe be put that is purely intellectual. Suppoſe, for inſtance, my character be unjuſtly traduced, and, for a time, I be reckoned a moſt infamous ſcoundrel; yet, if I be certain, that in a few days my innocence will be effectually cleared, ſo that no perſon whatever will entertain the leaſt doubt of it, ſhall I, in the mean time, be affected and mortified, with the ſenſe of my diſgrace? No, I ſhall hardly feel it at all; but ſhall rather ſecretly exult in the future triumph of

of my innocence, and ſhall ſhow an unabaſhed and cheerful countenance, till the preſent load of infamy be removed. It muſt be owned, however, that the ſenſe of infamy, in this caſe, will be felt more or leſs, according to the degree of comprehenſion of mind to which we are arrived, and alſo that we ſhall be able to bear unjuſt ſcandal for a longer or ſhorter ſpace of time in the ſame proportion. The ſame obſervation may alſo be made with reſpect to all the caſes mentioned above. Thus it is that, by this power of comprehenſion, we are able to balance one idea or ſenſation with another, whether they be of the ſame, or of different kinds. With this reſource, a good man, conſcious of his own integrity, grows every day leſs ſenſible to the cenſures of men, conſoling himſelf with the approbation of his own mind, and the perſuaſion that he enjoys the favour of his Maker; till, after ſufficient experience, this juſt ſenſe of things will make him almoſt wholly indifferent, on his own account, to every thing that the world can think or ſay of him.

A certain degree of this comprehenſion of mind, employed about proper objects, is ſufficient to make a man virtuous through the whole courſe of his life. To arrive at this, nothing is wanting, but a diſtinct and ready apprehenſion of all the ill conſequences of vice, and of all the good effects of virtue. For, as ſoon as, by this extended power of aſſociation, we perceive vice, with all that accompanies and follows it, as *one undivided thing*, and the virtues, with all their train, as one undivided thing likewiſe,

wiſe, the ſuperiority of the latter, upon the whole, is ſo great, that no man could heſitate a moment which to prefer. It is only by partial views of things that we are impoſed upon, are bewildered, and confounded in our choice. When, in conſequence of acting for ſome time with this clear and ſteady view of things, virtuous conduct is become habitual, the pains and difficulties of a virtuous courſe abſolutely vaniſh, and are abſorbed in the ſenſe of the infinitely greater good we hereby inſure to ourſelves. In this caſe, even the pleaſures of vice would be ſhunned with abhorrence, becauſe we could never ſeparate from them the idea of the infinitely greater pains, with which they are cloſely connected.

In matters which we are much accuſtomed to, this comprehenſion of mind, and coaleſcence of ideas, is remarkably ready and complete. A perſon who has been much converſant in buſineſs and accounts, and who every day meets with gains or loſſes, is effected juſt as the balance of the profits would have affected him, if he had never heard of the particulars. A perſon who is leſs converſant in theſe things would feel his mind, as it were, vibrate between both, and would longer perceive their ſeparate effects.

The power of habit, in promoting a perfect coaleſcence of aſſociated ideas, is moſt remarkable in caſes where the external ſenſes are concerned. The moon, when near the horizon, ſeems to be conſiderably larger than it does when it is near the meridian; but this can be owing to nothing but the effect of habit, in conſequence

of

of having frequently compared in apparent magnitude with thoſe of the intermediate objects; for its picture upon the retina is well known to be of the ſame dimenſions, and therefore a child, or a perſon wholly without experience, could not imagine any difference in them. Nay it is evident, from the laws of optics, that originally all objects appear to be in the ſame plane, and that it is from experience, or habit, that we firſt get the idea of diſtance, or of any dimenſion beſides length and breadth.

Again, it is probable, that all objects appear double to every perſon, till by experience we find the miſtake, and then learn to conceive of impreſſions, made upon two correſponding points of the retina, as referring but to one object. However, ſo abſolutely fixed is our *judgment* (for ſuch only it evidently is originally) that the moon is larger near the horizon, and that the appearance of two objects is, in reality, no more than that of one, that we are now even puzzled to account for the fact. Perhaps like obſervations might be made concerning our other ſenſes.

All theſe caſes are remarkable inſtances of the power of aſſociation, and demonſtrate a poſſibility, not only that an *idea*, but even a *ſenſation* may ceaſe to appear to be what it originally was; yea, that it may be ſo intimately connected with, and abſolutely loſt in aſſociated ideas only, as to be no longer capable of being reſolved back again into its former ſtate.

Another thing worthy of our notice in theſe facts is, that this amazing effect is accompliſhed in a limited time, even pretty early in life: for

no

no perſon can remember the time when objects appeared to him otherwiſe than they do now.

Do not theſe plain, but ſtriking facts, teach us to conceive, how poſſible it is, that any ideas whatever may ſo entirely coaleſce by aſſociation, that the component parts of the whole image ſhall abſolutely diſappear, and never more be ſeen in the ſame light in which they were originally viewed. Thus all ideas of pain may, at length, perfectly unite with thoſe of the pleaſures which they have accompanied, or to which they have been ſubſervient; and when once the general aſſociation, founded on the connection of good and evil, pleaſure and pain, obſerved through all nature, is firmly eſtabliſhed (like the fixing of the correſponding points in the retina) not even the moſt ſudden appearance of evil will be able to affect the mind with the idea of any thing but what is right and deſirable upon the whole, any more than two images, one in each eye, though ever ſo unexpectedly impreſſed, are not able, even for a moment, or by ſurprize, to give us the idea of two objects; though this was always the caſe in our infancy, and would be ſo ſtill without aſſociation of ideas. If ever our minds ſhould arrive at the perfect ſtate here hinted at, all the works of God, and all the events of divine providence will conſtantly appear to us as they do to the Divine Being himſelf, *i. e.* perfectly and infinitely good, without the leaſt perceivable mixture of evil.

In what time it is even poſſible to effect all this, cannot, with the leaſt certainty, be ſo much as conjectured: for though we cannot remember

ber objects appearing to us in any other manner than they now do; yet as theſe aſſociations of viſible ideas muſt have been impreſſed every time we opened our eyes, from the time that we began to take any notice of things; we muſt conclude, that this operation cannot but require a very long and ſteady application of mind. Temporary pains and evils of all kinds, muſt be very clearly and ſatisfactorily ſeen to be, in all caſes, productive of happineſs in the iſſue, under the government of an infinitely good God; and the conviction muſt be repeated and *felt* again and again, before the ideas will entirely, univerſally, and readily coaleſce; ſo that, by reaſon of the neceſſary avocation of mind, and the unſteady and imperfect views of things we can gain in this ſtate, little can be done towards it here, and it muſt be referred to the attainments of a better world.

The above-mentioned facts, however, ſhew, in the ſtrongeſt light, what is the natural progreſs and effect of aſſociation of ideas in the human mind. We ſee the courſe that things are evidently in, and it doth not appear, that any bounds can be ſet to it. We muſt, therefore, in favourable circumſtances (ſuch as we ſhall, no doubt, find ourſelves in a future world) approximate to this perfection of comprehenſion with the experience of every day; and in this way, time only is requiſite, to make a mere man arrive at a pitch of excellence and happineſs, of which we are able, at preſent, to form but very imperfect conceptions. With theſe lights, though, as yet, we are able to apply them but

very imperfectly, how may we ſtand amazed in the contemplation of our future ſelves!

By the help of theſe conſiderations, we may form ſome idea wherein conſiſts the ſuperiority of beings of higher orders, whoſe intellectual powers exceed ours. The aſſociation of their ideas may be more extenſive, and aſſociated ideas may unite and coaleſce more readily, and perfectly in their minds, than they do in ours; the conſequence of which will be, that ideas collected from a greater ſpace, both before and after the preſent moment, will be coexiſtent in their minds; which will make the influence of ideas ſtill greater, and that of ſenſation (or what may be in them analogous to ſenſation in us) ſtill leſs than it is with us; ſo that their natures will be more purely intellectual than ours.

Hence, alſo, if we may preſume to indulge a conjecture on ſuch a ſubject, may we form a faint idea of the incomprehenſible greatneſs and perfection of the Divine Being. For ſince there is a real connection of all things, in the whole ſyſtem of nature, how diſtant ſoever the parts of it may be, in point of time or place; this connection may at once be ſo completely ſeen by him who planned, and who directs the whole, that it may be ſaid, there is nothing paſt or future in his ideas; but that to him, the whole compaſs of duration is, to every real purpoſe, without diſtinction, preſent. To him, therefore, one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day; the two extremes, being ſo perfectly united, and ſo equally preſent,

ſent, that the intervals, how different ſoever, vaniſh alike in both caſes.

We ſee, then, the courſe which the Divine Being has pointed out for the improvement of intelligent beings, whereby we may make approaches to the excellence and happineſs of the divine nature. We are to be influenced leſs by ſenſation, and more by aſſociated ideas perpetually. The aſſociation of all connected ideas is to grow more perfect, and more extenſive continually, till things paſt, preſent, and to come, ſhall, to greater and greater diſtances, become the ſubject of our contemplation, and the ſource of our happineſs. Proviſion is made for the continuance of this progreſs, in the ſtructure of our minds, and in all the influences to which we are expoſed. All the objects about which we are converſant, and all the events to which we are liable, are contrived to favour it.

Let us now conſider whether any thing ſimilar to this may be obſerved in the ſcheme of revelation; and ſince both the ordinary and extraordinary courſe of divine providence have the ſame object with reſpect to us, both being deſigned and calculated to raiſe, improve, and bleſs the human race; let us conſider whether they be conducted in a manner analogous to one another; ſo that we may trace the ſame hand in both, and hence derive a preſumptive argument in favour of revelation.

To me, I own, there ſeems to be, in this reſpect, a very great analogy between both theſe diſpenſations of God to mankind, and the argu-

ment that may thence be deduced in favour of revelation ſtrikes me very much. For in thoſe extraordinary diſpenſations of God to mankind, of which we are informed in the books of ſcripture, we ſee a moſt glorious apparatus for accompliſhing this great end, for enlarging the comprehenſion of the human mind, and raiſing us to the higheſt pitch of perfection and excellence.

To have the mind impreſſed with the idea of its being in a ſtate of moral government, and that our actions have great and diſtant conſequences, is of admirable uſe in this reſpect; and this, we find, was the ſituation of Adam preſently after he came from the hands of his Maker. He was permitted the free uſe of all the trees in the garden of Eden except one, which he was forbidden to meddle with under ſevere penalties. In theſe circumſtances he was under a neceſſity of looking before him, and attending to the diſtant conſequences of what he was doing. He ſaw (as is generally underſtood) an immortal exiſtence before him in caſe of obedience, and of prudence and regularity in the gratification of his appetites; and death (of the meaning of which he was, no doubt, informed) in caſe of diſobedience and irregular indulgence.

If we conſider the importance of having enlarged views, and of the attention being engaged upon objects, beyond the preſent moment, we muſt ſee how vaſtly ſuperior this ſituation was, with reſpect to the improvement of his faculties, to a ſtate in which he ſhould have been left to the

the random indulgence of his appetites, without any intimation of the conſequence, except what he could learn by ſlow experience. The more we think upon this ſubject, the greater will this advantage appear to be. Mankind might, for ages, have been little more than brutes, without ſome proviſion and aſſiſtance of this kind.

If the object of this trial, viz. the abſtaining from the fruit of a tree, appear trifling, we ſhould conſider the infantile ſtate of the firſt man, and the only dangerous exceſſes that, in his ſituation, he could be guilty of; and we may ſee the greateſt propriety in this very circumſtance. Would it not have been much more abſurd to have forbidden him to ſteal, to commit adultery, or, indeed, to have enjoined him the obſervance of any of the ten commandments of the moral law. What is more natural or common with ourſelves, than to forbid children to eat of certain kinds of food, or to meddle with things that are moſt in their way, by which they are liable to do harm to themſelves or others. They are not capable of offending in any other reſpects, or of underſtanding any higher precepts. We are not made acquainted with all the reſtrictions under which our firſt parents were laid; but it cannot be doubted, but that they muſt have been of a ſalutary nature, whether they themſelves might be aware of it or not. We do not always give our children the reaſon of the reſtrictions we lay them under, becauſe they are not always capable of underſtanding them. The prohibition

to eat of a particular fruit is the only one that is mentioned by Moſes, becauſe that was the caſe in which Adam tranſgreſſed; but, for any thing we know, he might have been as expreſsly forbidden to jump from a precipice, or to plunge into a pit of water; and the forbidden fruit might have been as naturally hurtful to him as either of them.

It is by no means improbable, but that ſomething of *fable* may have mixed with ſo ancient a hiſtory as that of the *Fall*; and the preſent condition of man was, no doubt, both *foreſeen* and *intended* by our all-wiſe Creator, as the beſt for us upon the whole; but I think we cannot reaſonably object to the leading circumſtances in Moſes's account of the manner in which we came into it. And as it repreſents man as entering upon exiſtence under a ſenſe of *moral government*, it is far more agreeable to the ideas we conceive of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, more favourable to the human race, and more conſonant to the natural proviſion he has made for enlarging the comprehenſion of the human mind, and thereby perfecting our natures, and advancing our happineſs; and therefore far ſuperior to the condition in which Lucretius, and the reſt of the Epicureans, repreſent the introduction of man into the world, *i. e.* with no greater advantage for looking before him, enlarging his views, and increaſing his happineſs, than the loweſt of the animal creation.

In the ſentence paſſed upon man after the fall, we ſee an opportunity is taken of carrying the

the views of the human mind to objects ſtill more remote; and encouraging, though obſcure views are open to him, in the promiſe, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head.

In the patriarchal ages, the intercourſe between the Divine Being and the human race is continued; but without his aſſuming a higher character than men in thoſe times were capable of having intercourſe with. Conſequently, their apprehenſions of moral government would be growing more clear and determinate, and their ideas of duty and obligation (together with their expectation of conſequences correſponding to their actions) more definite and certain; ſo as to induce them to be leſs influenced by proſpects of immediate pleaſure or gain than before.

The fate of men's children and poſterity is always an intereſting object to them, and muſt have been peculiarly ſo in the early ages of the world, when the whole earth was before them, and every man had the chance of being the founder of great and mighty nations. Theſe, therefore, were the views with which the Divine Being thought proper, at that time, to engage the attention of the patriarchs, and enforce the obligation of virtue. Abraham had the promiſe of becoming the *father of many nations*, and that *in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*. With theſe proſpects, we find his mind ſo much enlarged, and his faith in futurity ſo ſtrong, that he leaves his native land; content and happy in being a ſojourner in the country which his poſterity were to poſſeſs.

In the whole courſe of the Jewiſh hiſtory, repeated miracles and prophecies would conſtantly tend to keep up the views of that people to great and remote objects. And this, together with the *diſtinct ideas* they had of the origin of the world, and the early hiſtory of it, their knowledge of the riſe of their own nation, and of the frequent interpoſitions of the Divine Being in their favour, would give a dignity to their conceptions, and a grandeur to their proſpects, to which the heathen nations muſt have been ſtrangers. There was a majeſty and dignity in the Jewiſh ritual, in their temple and the ſervice of it, which far exceeded any thing in the heathen world; and being accompanied with juſt and ſublime ideas of the one true God, it muſt have given a ſublimity to their ſentiments, and a warmth and fervour to their religious impreſſions, to which other nations could not have attained. Accordingly, in all the compoſitions of the heathen poets, in honour of their gods, there are no traces of any thing like that ſpirit of manly devotion, which animates the pſalms of David.

In the frequent relapſes of the Jews into idolatry, the prophets are continually ſent of God to remind them of the allegiance they owed to their Maker, to hold out to them the expectation of his favour or reſentment, and thereby preſerve upon their minds the influence of great and remote objects.

When they were effectually cured of their proneneſs to idolatry, by the Babyloniſh captivity, and therefore ſuch frequent interpoſitions of the Divine

Divine Being were leſs neceſſary, their minds were prepared for that long interruption of miracles which enſued, by the remarkably diſtinct prophecies of Iſaiah, Daniel, and Malachi, concerning future and glorious times under the Meſſiah. The very year of his appearance was fixed by Daniel, and though it was not done in ſuch a manner as to enable them to make it out with perfect exactneſs, yet it was ſufficient to keep up their attention to it; and, in fact, they were not ſo far out in their calculations, but that, at the time of our Saviour, and not long before, we find a general and moſt ardent expectation raiſed in the whole body of the Jewiſh nation of ſome approaching deliverer.

In this interval, therefore, between the captivity and the birth of Chriſt, far greater views and proſpects were preſent to the mind of a Jew, than people of other nations could have any idea of. So great was the actual influence of theſe ideas, that, in the time of the Maccabees, they ſhewed a heroiſm and magnanimity in the defence of their religion, and in ſuffering for it, which muſt have aſtoniſhed their heathen perſecutors. And our Saviour found among them ſuch notions of a future ſtate, and of a reſurrection as (however they came by them, and how imperfect and obſcure ſoever they were) could not fail to make numbers of them to think and act in a manner far ſuperior to the moſt admired of the Greek and Roman philoſophers.

If the attention of the Jews was kept awake to great and diſtant objects, how much more is this the caſe with chriſtians, to whom life and im-

immortality are brought to light by the goſpel. Chriſtianity is the laſt diſpenſation of God to mankind, and it doth not ſeem poſſible, that more ample proviſion ſhould be made to enlarge the views and comprehenſion of the human mind, in order to fix its attention upon great and remote objects, and raiſe it above the influence of preſent and temporary things.

A true chriſtian, like his great maſter, is *not of this world*, but a citizen of heaven. He conſiders himſelf as a *ſtranger and pilgrim here below, and lives by faith and not by ſight*. Let him be ever ſo poor and deſpiſed here, he looks upon himſelf as an heir of immortal glory and felicity, of an *inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for him*. He may ſee his body decaying with old age, waſting with a diſorder, or mangled with torture, and every way at the mercy of his enraged perſecutors; but he rejoices in the firm belief and expectation of its riſing again *incorruptible* at the laſt day; and that when *Chriſt, who is the reſurrection and the life, ſhall appear, he alſo ſhall appear with him in glory*.

What an elevation of thought and ſentiment is here! How muſt this faith make us *overcome the world*, and render us ſuperior to its allurements or its threats. With this enlarged comprehenſion of mind, which brings the future conſequences of his actions into immediate proſpect, it is impoſſible that a ſincere chriſtian ſhould live addicted to vicious gratifications and purſuits, which he muſt ſee to be deſtructive of theſe his animating hopes; and he muſt neceſſarily

rily grow more in love with that temper and conduct which is, with the greateſt propriety, called *chriſtian*, and which inſures to him theſe glorious expectations. *As he who has called him* to theſe great privileges *is holy, ſo will he alſo be holy in all manner of converſation.* It will be his daily endeavour to *cultivate that holineſs of heart and life, without which*, he is ſenſible, *no man can ſee the Lord. With this hope ſet before him*, all the afflictions of this preſent life will ſeem light, trifling, and not worthy to be named with, but will be abſolutely loſt in, the conſideration of that *eternal weight of glory* which awaits his patient continuance in well doing.

This ſuperiority to preſent and temporary things, which is attained by truly chriſtian principles, is of the moſt rational nature, being of the ſame kind with that which is acquired by experience, and which neceſſarily reſults from the ſtructure of our minds, and the circumſtances in which Divine Providence has placed us in this world: for it is only perfecting the aſſociation of thoſe ideas which have a real connection, and uniting in our minds the ſeveral parts of one whole, and things which nothing but time ſeparates. If it be compared with that kind of ſuperiority which might be acquired by other principles, thoſe of the *Stoics*, for inſtance, its advantage will appear to be exceeding great.

The Stoic affects to deſpiſe pain, becauſe, according to his arbitrary definition of things, it cannot be called an *evil*, and does not depend upon himſelf. Having imagined, though without any ground, that every man's happineſs muſt,

muſt, in every caſe, ariſe from himſelf (in excluſion even of the Divine Being) he thinks it abſurd to complain of any thing which he could not help. Complaint implies a ſenſe of unhappineſs; and this, according to his hypotheſis, can never take place without his own conſent. If his wife or child be in the moſt dreadful agonies, he looks, or affects to look on their condition with the greateſt tranquillity, and the moſt unfeeling indifference; ſatisfied that ſickneſs and pain are not in his catalogue of *things within his power*, and that the ſufferers themſelves are not unhappy, ſince misfortunes are unavoidable, and he knew that his wife or child were not naturally exempt from them. When he dies, he expects that his ſoul, being a particle detached from the Univerſal Mind, will be abſorbed in it again, and that his ſeparate conſciouſneſs will be loſt for ever.

Theſe are the great outlines of the famous philoſophical ſyſtem of Zeno, which is ſaid to have made ſo many great men; but it has certainly no foundation in nature. The principles of it can never have been really felt, and all the boaſted effects of it muſt have ariſen from conceit and obſtinacy.

How differently, and how much more naturally does the chriſtian think and act in the caſes above-mentioned! He does not pretend to deny the evidence of his ſenſes, nor has recourſe to whimſical diſtinctions; and not having maintained that *pain is no evil*, he finds himſelf under no neceſſity of behaving as if he was unaffected by it. He owns that preſent ſufferings are *not*

joyous,

joyous, but grievous; but he ſtill thinks them nothing in compariſon with *the glory that ſhall be revealed*, and therefore he *endures patiently* for righteouſneſs ſake, in a firm belief of being more than recompenſed for them *at the reſurrection of the juſt*. If his friends be in diſtreſs, he has no principles that lead him to check, but, on the other hand, ſuch as encourage him freely to indulge his natural ſympathy with them; and theſe feelings will certainly prompt him to exert himſelf to the utmoſt in their favour. At the ſame time he will not fail to exhort his friends to the duties of chriſtian patience and fortitude; inculcating the great chriſtian doctrine of the tranſitorineſs of this world, and its ſubſerviency to another. When he dies, he indulges no extravagant, but really uncomfortable conceit, about being abſorbed in the Divine Mind; but believes that he ſhall, in his own perſon, riſe again from the dead, when he ſhall reſume, and retain his own ſeparate conſciouſneſs, live again under the government of that God whoſe goodneſs he has experienced, and whoſe friendſhip he has ſecured, know all his virtuous friends once more, and rejoice with them through all eternity.

If we conſider the *principles of morals* in the heathen world, we ſhall ſee the manifeſt advantage there is over it in the plan of revelation. The views of the heathens upon this ſubject were exceedingly confined, and did not require that comprehenſion of mind, which is neceſſary to the practice of thoſe duties that were enjoined both in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian ſyſtems. The great

great duties of piety, conſiſting in the fear and love of God, and a cheerful reliance on his providence, were, in a manner, unknown in ancient times beyond the boundaries of Judea. And what can more evidently tend to enlarge the comprehenſion and faculties of the human mind, than the regards which are due to the Maker and Governor of the world?

While the attention of the heathens were wholly engroſſed by ſenſible things, thoſe who were favoured with divine revelation, even in its moſt imperfect ſtate, were engaged in the contemplation of their inviſible author. They conſidered the enjoyments of life as the effects of his bounty, and all the events of it as taking place according to the wiſe appointment of his providence. Thus was the power of aſſociation enabled to preſent to their minds the ideas of great and remote objects, by which their ſentiments were influenced, and their conduct directed. By this means, limited as were the views of the ancient patriarchs, their conceptions were far more enlarged, and conſequently their minds more intellectual than thoſe of the Gentile world.

It is true, that all the heathens were prone to ſuperſtition, and that a great number of their actions were influenced by regards to inviſible agents; but (not to ſay, what is very probable, that their religion was, in this reſpect, a corruption of the patriarchal) all the gods they had any idea of, at leaſt all with whom they maintained any intercourſe, were *local* and *territorial* divinities, liable to the influence of low and vulgar

gar paſſions, and limited in their powers and operations. It was not poſſible, therefore, that their theology ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch ſublime ideas, as muſt have been conceived by the Jews, from the peruſal of the books of Moſes; in which we find the idea of one God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, who eſtabliſhed, and who controuls the laws of nature, and who ſuperintends the affairs of the whole world, giving the kingdoms of it to whomſoever he pleaſes; a being of unſpotted purity, and a friend and protector of all good men. So far were the notions which the Gentiles entertained of their gods below the conceptions of the Jews, concerning their Jehovah, the Lord of heaven and earth, *who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage,* deſtroying their enemies in the Red Sea, and feeding them with bread from heaven for the ſpace of forty years; that they could hardly have had any ideas to ſome of the fineſt expreſſions which occur in the ſacred books of the Jews; as, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,* and many others, which expreſs ſentiments of the moſt pure and exalted devotion.

If any people have exalted and ſublime ideas, they are ſure to be found in their poetry; but how poor and low is the ſacred poetry of the heathens in compariſon with the pſalms of David! The poems of Homer, of Heſiod, or of Callimachus, in honour of the Grecian gods, can hardly be read without laughter; but the book of Pſalms (the greateſt part of which were written long before the works of any of thoſe

thoſe Grecian poets, and by perſons who had travelled and ſeen far leſs than they had done) cannot be read without the greateſt ſerioufneſs, and are ſtill capable of exciting ſentiments of the warmeſt and moſt exalted, and yet the moſt perfectly rational devotion. They give us the moſt ſublime ideas of the infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God. This difference between the poetry of the Jews and the Greeks, in favour of the former, is ſo great, that I think it cannot be accounted for without the ſuppoſition of divine communications. In point of genius, the Greeks ſeem to have been evidently ſuperior, and they were certainly poſſeſſed of the art of compoſition in much greater perfection. Whence, then, could ariſe ſo manifeſt an inferiority in this reſpect? It muſt have been becauſe the Jewiſh theology gave that nation ideas of a being infinitely ſuperior to themſelves, the contemplation of which, with that of his works, and of his providence, would tend to improve and exalt their faculties; whereas the heathen theology gave them no ideas of beings much ſuperior to the race of man. In general the Gods of the Greeks and Romans were ſuppoſed to have been mere men, beings of the ſame rank and condition with themſelves; and though their powers were ſuppoſed to be enlarged upon their deification, their paſſions and morals were not at all improved, but continued juſt the ſame as before; ſo that their greater powers were employed about the gratification of the loweſt appetites. This theology, therefore, could not infuſe that noble enthuſiaſm,

thuſiaſm, which was inſpired by the Jewiſh religion, but muſt rather have tended to debaſe their faculties.

That extenſive and perfect *benevolence*, which is ſo ſtrongly inculcated in the New Teſtament, implies more enlarged ſentiments, and greater perfection of the intellectual faculties, than that more limited benevolence, which is treated of by the heathen moraliſts, which was hardly ever thought to extend farther than to a love of one's own countrymen, and which admitted ſlaves to none of the privileges of men, but conſidered them as no other than the property of their maſters. But, in the eye of a Chriſtian, Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are all equal. The boaſted attachments of private friendſhip are not more endearing than that mutual love which Chriſt recommends to his diſciples. But, whereas, private friendſhip was, with the Greeks and Romans, the perfection, and almoſt the end of all virtue, the *brotherly love* of chriſtians is only conſidered as a branch of a more extenſive benevolence, and leads to the love of all the human race.

It is evident, that the duties of contentment, truſt in divine providence, meekneſs, patience, forbearance, and forgiveneſs of injuries, are more inſiſted on by Chriſt and his apoſtles, than by any of the heathen philoſophers; and theſe virtues certainly require a greater comprehenſion of mind than any other ſocial duties. Children are quick in their reſentments, their anger is preſently excited, and they are unable to conceal what little malice or revenge they

are capable of; but, in proportion as men advance in age, in experience, and, conſequently, in intellect, they are able to overlook affronts, and to ſuſpend, or wholly to ſtifle their reſentments; becauſe they are able to take in more diſtant conſequences of paſſions and actions; and the ſentiments which are ſuggeſted by theſe extenſive views, moderate and overpower thoſe which are prompted by their preſent ſenſations.

Chriſtianity, therefore, by extending theſe duties, ſuppoſes, and thereby favours and promotes a ſtill greater advance in intellectual perfection. To act like a chriſtian, a man muſt be poſſeſſed of true greatneſs of mind, a ſelf-command, fortitude, or magnanimity, which is infinitely more ſuperior to the diſguiſed revenge of which ſome are capable, and which, they can brood over for years, than this is ſuperior to the quick reſentments of children. It requires a more than proportionably and juſt knowledge of things, more experience, and more foreſight.

Thus does the chriſtian ſcheme appear to be perfectly conſonant to nature. It ſuppoſes a ſeries of diſpenſations, in which the human mind is operated upon, and its improvement promoted in a manner analogous to that in which it is actually operated upon, and its improvement promoted every day. As the one, therefore, is conducted according to the ordinary providence of the Divine Being, the other is what might be expected from his extraordinary diſpenſations. Both theſe ſchemes have the ſame great object in view, and in both of them

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the ſame end is gained by the ſame methods. For, in fact, the only inſtrument employed is that great and extenſive principle of *aſſociation of ideas*, which is ſo conſpicuous in the human mind, and which, according to the admirable theory of Dr. Hartley, furniſhes the *ſtamina* for all its other properties, and is the ſource of all our faculties.

It is by this principle of *aſſociation*, that our views are enlarged to take in diſtant objects, but objects that have a real connection with thoſe that are preſent. And it is an habitual attention to theſe aſſociated circumſtances of our actions, that gives them an influence as if they were preſent. As virtue, with all its conſequences in this life, is eligible upon the whole, we are led, by this principle of aſſociation, to chuſe and practice it, without any other guide than nature and common providence; but as virtue, with all thoſe more extenſive conſequences, which revelation informs us of, is infinitely more eligible; we are led, by the ſame principle of aſſociation, to love it with more ardour, and to practiſe it with more conſtancy; becauſe, by the help of thoſe lights, which are furniſhed by the extraordinary providence of Almighty God, in the revelation of his will to mankind, we ſee it to be a thing in which we are more deeply intereſted, than we could otherwiſe have known ourſelves to be.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

I can no way ſo properly ſignify my entire approbation of your plan, as by contributing my beſt endeavours to its ſupport and utility. My preſent mite is the firſt fruit, which I cheerfully put into your hands, to be received or rejected according to your better judgment.

An Eſſay on the Hiſtory and Character of Judas.

AMONG the multitude of criticiſms and commentaries on the ſacred writings, it is a little extraordinary, that the hiſtory and character of Judas ſhould have eſcaped all particular notice, whether of the friend or the enemy of revelation. Leſs important parts have excited the favourable attention of the former, and leſs exceptionable parts the reprehenſion of the latter, yet I do not know ever to have met with any thing intereſting on the ſubject.* There would not, indeed, be any thing extraordinary in this ſilence of the critics, if the hiſtory of Judas contained nothing intereſting to the cauſe of chriſtianity; but, it has long appeared to me, that the general acceptation of this hiſtory includes ſome conſiderable difficulties, and which every ſincere friend to ſo excellent a cauſe, would wiſh to ſee removed. It is the buſineſs of this Eſſay to point out theſe difficulties, and the ſolu-

* This article was written a conſiderable time before the publication of another, on the ſame ſubject, in a preceding number of this work, and which contains ſome of the ſame thoughts that occur in this.

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tion they have received in the author's own mind. Let us, firſt of all, collect into one view the few materials which compoſe the hiſtory of this falſe diſciple.

It is not eaſy to ſay, from what motives our Lord made choice of his diſciples, but it is probable, that an inclination to their Lord firſt manifeſted itſelf on their part; and as a temporal Meſſiah was the favourite hope of the whole Jewiſh nation, and for a long time obſtinately poſſeſſed the minds of the apoſtles themſelves, it will not be wondered that ſuch an one as Judas, ſtimulated by no other than a worldly motive, ſhould inſinuate himſelf into an office, for which he was certainly unfitted, and moſt probably had never any real inclination. Choſen he was, however, did attend upon, and aſſiſt our Lord in his miniſtry, and appears to have been admitted to equal familiarity and confidence with the reſt of the twelve. He is enumerated among the twelve, whom Jeſus choſe out of his more numerous diſciples, and whom himſelf diſtinguiſhed by the name of apoſtles. He is again expreſsly named, when Jeſus ſent them forth to preach the goſpel, and endowed them with extraordinary powers, as the credentials of their divine commiſſion. It is ſome time before our Saviour diſcovers a ſuſpicion of the fidelity of any of his diſciples, not according to the teſtimony of John, who gives the firſt intimations of it, until the doctrines and miracles of Jeſus had ſpread his fame throughout all Judea, excited the attention of the people, and ſtirred up the envy and malice

of the rulers. In one of his public diſcourſes, when through a miſapprehenſion of his meaning, many of his followers, offended at the ſeeming harſhneſs of his doctrine, turned their back, and followed him no more; Jeſus, addreſſing himſelf to the twelve, ſaid, *Will ye alſo leave me?* He receives the vows of their unſhaken fidelity, but replies, *Have I not choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* This the hiſtorian illuſtrates by obſerving, that he ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, for it was he that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

In one reſpect, this diſciple was diſtinguiſhed by a particular office or truſt, not, perhaps, ill-ſuited to the turn of his mind; the little wealth which belonged to this little ſociety being committed to his charge, and the diſburſements for their common wants or charitable benefactions iſſuing through his hands. This, at leaſt, appears to be what is meant by his bearing the bag or purſe, and the ſame apoſtle, who has acquainted us with this circumſtance, teſtifies that this charge had not been very faithfully executed by him; for the ſiſter of Lazarus, in the overflow of her grateful affection, having, according to the cuſtom of the ancients, anointed the feet of Jeſus with ſome very coſtly perfumes, Judas rebukes the action from a pretence of compaſſionate providence for the poor, but, ſays the evangeliſt, it was, *not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag.* The hiſtorian, therefore, directly charges him with the betraying of his truſt, and infers from thence, that he luſted after the purchaſe of this valuable

valuable ointment, only as the prey of his future diſhoneſty. Whether it be that his character became ſuſpected, which from the preceding teſtimony of his fellow-apoſtle is exceedingly probable; or that he now deſpaired to reap thoſe mercenary advantages from his adherence to Jeſus Chriſt, which he at firſt had promiſed himſelf, or that both cauſes concurred to awaken all the traitor in him; this, at leaſt, is certain, that he ſhortly after introduces himſelf to the chief prieſts and rulers of the Jews, who were too ready to receive any infamous propoſals which might facilitate their long-meditated malice againſt the life of a perſon, whoſe ſuperior virtues and reputation were a continual torment to them.

Judas engages to betray his maſter into their hands, and receives from his employers the hire of his villainy. This iniquitous contract being made, he returns to his Lord, who then, for the firſt time, diſcovers his knowledge of the perſon of his betrayer. On the near approach of his laſt ſufferings, he was troubled in ſpirit, and repeating his former declaration, that one of the twelve, who then ſat at ſupper with him, ſhould betray him; John, who leaned on his maſter's boſom, intreating to know which of them ſhould act this deteſted part, he gives him a mark by which the individual traitor ſhould be known; *he it is*, ſays he, *to whom I ſhall give the ſop, when I have dipped it*; and immediately giving the ſop, he addreſſes himſelf to this wretched, wicked man, and bids him execute quickly what he had purpoſed in his

breaſt. The guilty wretch retires from the penetrating eye of his maſter, and ſtimulated, perhaps, by this diſcovery of his traiterous intentions, haſtens the execution of them; he quits, for ever, the ſociety, into which he ought never to have entered, receives from the chief prieſts a band of ſoldiers, and returns to the well-known retirement of his Lord, delivers him, under the ſecurity of night, into the hands of his malicious enemies. While theſe are carrying on the mock-appearance of a trial, and every thing is haſtening to the death of the victim; the conſcience of the traitor reſumes its ſuſpended empire of his mind, repentance of the accurſed part which he had acted turns upon him, he hurries into the preſence of the chief prieſts, avows the innocence of his Lord, proclaims his own baſeneſs; but meeting with no ſympathetic compunctions in thoſe more hardened monſters, he caſts down, with indignation before them, the ſordid hire of his wickedneſs, and, flying from them, makes a vain effort to fly from himſelf. In the deſperate agony of his mind, he takes the laſt ſtep of inſupportable guilt, by laying violent hands upon his life.

Such is the hiſtory of Judas, his unhappy life, and unhappy end, as recorded by his fellow-apoſtles. Let us now take a critical view of it, and ſee whether the enemy or the friend of chriſtianity may moſt avail himſelf of it.

It is generally preſumed, that the treachery of Judas is one of thoſe facts in the life of Chriſt, which, being foreknown by God, was revealed to the Jewiſh nation, amongſt the other

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diſcoveries of the promiſed Meſſiah; and this opinion is founded upon ſuppoſed predictions of the traitor, long before the important ſcene of human redemption was diſplayed, as well as on the knowledge which Jeſus Chriſt himſelf diſcovered of this afflicting circumſtance, after he had commenced his miniſtry, and while this betrayer was numbered amongſt his ſelect diſciples, and was certainly ſuppoſed to be equally faithful and attached to him with any of the twelve. Suppoſing this opinion, therefore, to be juſtly founded, it may be aſked by the enemies of revelation, if the character of God be herein repreſented, agreeably to his wiſdom and to his goodneſs? Was it fitting the Divine Wiſdom, to deſign the admiſſion of ſo unworthy an aſſociate, in ſo good a cauſe? Does the part of Judas appear to be any way neceſſary to the ſcheme of human redemption; and, if neceſſary, did the foreknowledge of God influence the heart, and determine the conduct of this unhappy man? Muſt the integrity, the life, the happineſs here, and perhaps hereafter, of one amongſt the reaſonable and moral creatures of God, be ſacrificed, by his all-controuling power, to the cauſe in which his ſon was engaged? Theſe are queſtions of ſome importance, and which, if no ſatisfactory anſwer can be given thereto, may be thought to reflect, not on the moral character of Providence, for this is ſuppoſed to be without ſpot or blemiſh, but on the pretenſions of the chriſtian religion, which deriving itſelf immediately from God, can yet repreſent God in a view ſo oppoſite to the truth and perfection of his

his character. But the whole force of them reſts on the ſuppoſition, that the part which Judas would act, was predicted before Judas or his maſter made their appearance on this ſtage of human life, and, therefore, muſt have been foreſeen in all its circumſtances by that Being, from whom the prediction proceeded. This is generally ſuppoſed, and I confeſs myſelf to have been poſſeſſed with the ſame notion, before I had examined the evidences, which alone can authorize the opinion. But, on conſulting the ſacred prophecies, I find nothing which carries a ſufficient appearance of this ſuppoſed prediction.

St. Peter, in his ſpeech to his fellow-apoſtles, recommending the choice of a ſucceſſor to Judas, refers to two paſſages in the book of pſalms, as applicable to the fate of that falſe diſciple; but they have no more application to him, than moſt of the warm and angry imprecations of David againſt his enemies have. They are ſimply as follows, *Let their habitation*, viz. that of his enemies, *be deſolate, and let another take his place*; a deſcription ſo exceedingly imperfect and indefinite, that no one can ſuppoſe St. Peter to have meant any more, than in the words of David to ſpeak his ſentiments concerning Judas, and the vacancy which his crime had made in the number of the apoſtles.

The reference which the evangeliſt Matthew makes to a paſſage in the prophecies of Zechariah, will, perhaps, be thought ſomething more to the purpoſe. When Judas, in the agony of repentance, had thrown back to his vile

vile employers the purchaſe of his treachery; the tender-hearted prieſts, conſidering that it was the hire of blood, would not return the thirty pieces of ſilver into the treaſury of the temple, but bought therewith the potters field, as a place of burial for ſtrangers. On which fact the evangeliſt remarks, *Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet*, but it ſhould have been wrote *Zechariah*, for in the eleventh chapter of that prophet are the words alluded to. The paſſage is thus quoted by Matthew, *And they*, viz. the chief prieſts, *took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Iſrael did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.* But the words differ conſiderably in the original; Zechariah, ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, *I ſaid unto them*, viz. to the people of Iſrael, *If ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear; ſo they weighed for me thirty pieces of ſilver, and the Lord ſaid unto me, Caſt it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them; and I took the thirty pieces of ſilver, and caſt them to the potter in the houſe of the Lord.* Now here is no mention of the field, or of any purchaſe at all being made with the money, nor are they the rulers of Iſrael who made application of it, but the prophet himſelf.

Moreover, in the whole chapter, of which theſe words are a part, it is difficult to make out any ſtrict alluſion to the perſon or hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, but only a repreſentation of the ingratitude of the Jewiſh nation to their beſt benefactors, and of thoſe miſeries, which this ingratitude

gratitude would entail upon them as its deſerved puniſhment. After having repreſented their deſolate eſtate, the prophet is ordered by God to feed the flock of the ſlaughter, when alluding to the hire of a ſhepherd, he demands the price which they were willing to give for his ſervices; but ſo paltry a ſum as thirty pieces being given, the Lord, as reſenting their mean and ungrateful parſimony, bids him throw back the goodly price at which he was prized of them.

This ſeems to be all that can fairly be collected from the paſſage, while, if it had really been intended as a prediction of that event which followed the repentance of Judas, and by the prophet Zechariah, in the character of a ſhepherd, we muſt underſtand the great ſhepherd Jeſus Chriſt, and by throwing the ſilver to the potter, the purchaſe of the potter's field, yet we muſt confeſs that the indignant return of the money ſhould not have been repreſented as the act of the prophet himſelf, much leſs the application of the money for the purchaſe of the potter's field, as his act, but the act of thoſe from whom it had been received, and to whom it was returned.

In fine, there is nothing applicable in the paſſage, to the fact of which it is the ſuppoſed prediction, unleſs that the preciſe ſum of thirty pieces of ſilver, and the word potter are ſpoken of in both. But, ſaving the coincidence of theſe two circumſtances, no explication of the prophet's words can render them at all deſcriptive of the tranſaction in Matthew. In the former, there is no traitor exhibited, no hire

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of any villainy received or returned, but the inadequate reward of a moſt virtuous and benevolent ſervice, and there is an utter confuſion of perſons in the prefiguration of the hiſtory and the hiſtory itſelf. He, therefore, who, from a too ſcrupulous regard to what he thinks the ſentiment of the apoſtle, will ſtill inſiſt upon the prophetic application of the paſſage, may, I think, with almoſt equal eaſe and propriety, deduce a prophecy of any fact from any page of any author. But it is more candid (and ſurely candour is due in the interpretation of every well-meaning author) to ſuppoſe, that St. Matthew meant to conſider the words of Zechariah, only as bearing ſome alluſion to the fact which he was then reciting; at leaſt, if he intended to apply them in a more important view, it will not be eaſy to excuſe the evangeliſt the liberty he has taken in ſo greatly altering the words and purport of the ſuppoſed prophecy. Nor in this conſtruction am I without the countenance of the moſt ſenſible and liberal commentators, who generally agree that many applications of the language of the Old Teſtament to the events of the New, are thus to be underſtood.

I can find but one inſtance where our Saviour himſelf refers to the language of the Old Teſtament, as illuſtrated by the treachery of Judas. In his laſt converſation with his diſciples, he abruptly diverts from the ſtile of inſtruction, and ſays, *I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen; but, that the ſcripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me.* Now it cannot, methinks, be imagined by any one, that our Lord intended

intended any thing farther by this reference, than to obſerve, that the ſame afflicting circumſtance which happened to David, and which he bemoans in the paſſage alluded to, was ready to be verified in him. At leaſt I am ſure, that the original has as little of the air and manner of a prophecy, as the lamentation of the treachery of a friend in any author whatever can have.

This, now, is all that can be made out of any alluſion to the hiſtory of Judas, throughout the whole of what are generally eſteemed to be the prophetic writers; and this very little, in that paſſage which, at firſt view, is the moſt ſtriking, alludes to no intereſting part of his hiſtory; while it might have been expected that his treachery would have been prefigured, rather than the unimportant circumſtance of the uſe which the Jewiſh rulers made of the hire of his villainy. There is, therefore, no ſufficient reaſon to conclude, that the character of Judas was at all predicted, nor have we authority from ſcripture to ſay, that the part which he acted in the laſt ſcene of our Saviour's life, was preknown, or pre-determined by God.

What the preſcience of the Deity may include is not eaſy to ſay, but perhaps we generally aſcribe more to it than is conſiſtent with the character of moral and accountable agents. But this is a queſtion which belongs more to natural than revealed religion; it is ſufficient to our preſent purpoſe, that the ſcripture has not ſuppoſed the neceſſity of ſuch a character as that of Judas, by the pre-diſcovery of that character, and that the difficulty which we mentioned

oned as ſpringing out of this ſuppoſition, falls to the ground with the ſuppoſition itſelf. There is now no more difficulty in accounting for the exiſtence of this traitor; that one ſo unfit ſhould be joined as an aſſociate in ſo good and moral a cauſe, than for the thouſand examples of treachery, corruption and villainy which we continually meet with in the hiſtory of mankind. In this view the objection is removed from chriſtianity, and carried, if any where, to the throne of the Almighty himſelf, which it is as incumbent on the enemies as the friends of our religion to anſwer, and therefore does not properly introduce itſelf in our preſent ſubject.

But it will be urged, that Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented as knowing who the traitor ſhould be. Why, therefore, did he admit him into the number of his apoſtles, or if admitted before the knowledge was imparted to him, why did he not inſtantly expel him, as ſoon as the diſaffection of his heart, and inclination to the perfidious part which he acted, was revealed? But may not this queſtion be anſwered in the ſame manner as the preceding; for is it ſo very clear and eſtabliſhed a point, that our Saviour was acquainted with the future character of Judas at the time that he elected or admitted him into the number of his conſtant followers and diſciples, or that at any period he was acquainted with the individual perſon of the traitor before he actually pointed him out? This does not appear from any teſtimony of our Saviour's concerning him, nor are we therefore authoriſed to ſuppoſe, that he purpoſely ſelected a villain,

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a determined and devoted villain, not with the benevolent hope of touching his heart, and gaining him over to the cauſe of integrity, of truth and of virtue, but—for what! That he himſelf might be betrayed by him.

The univerſal preſcience of our Lord is a doctrine which many have taken up, and confidently talk of, but upon what authority I profeſs myſelf to be utterly ignorant, unleſs it be as a conſequence of the ſtill larger ſuppoſition, that he is, indeed, the very God himſelf. Our Saviour does, indeed, on ſome occaſions, appear to be poſſeſſed of the more than human faculty of knowing the ſecret thoughts of men, and of being acquainted with many important events in futurity, but he ſpeaks alſo of his knowledge being communicated to him from the Hoſt High, and we have his own teſtimony, that there were ſome things relative to his own kingdom which the Father had not revealed even unto him.

So far, therefore, as was conducive to the great work in which he was engaged, we have reaſon to ſuppoſe that many ſpecial communications from the Father of lights were repeatedly made to him; and what things our Lord actually appeared to have known, theſe we are authoriſed to ſay he did know, but not farther. Among theſe communications of the divine intelligence, might be the impending treachery of Judas: God, who ſaw the ripened baſeneſs of that traitor's heart, perhaps the traiterous deſign already meditated in his mind, might, before the ſacrifice of the innocent victim, impart to him the knowledge of this addition to his approaching ſufferings,

ferings, how near the betrayer was to his boſom; how deep, undeſerved, and unexpected a ſtab he ſhould receive from the hand of a friend. At leaſt, it is certain, that our Saviour diſcovers no apprehenſion of this treachery, till ſome time after the number of his diſciples had been completed, nor does he himſelf intimate, that he had been acquainted with it before-hand.

John, indeed, on the firſt ſuſpicion that our Lord imparted to his diſciples of the fidelity of ſome of them, adds this remark of his own; *for Jeſus Chriſt knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him*; but neither John, nor any other of the evangeliſts, have produced a ſingle aſſertion of their maſter's to this purpoſe. In fine, we are not obliged to ſuppoſe, that John was inſtructed to bear this teſtimony to his maſter's knowledge. He appears to be offering only his own opinion, and collected from the ſame circumſtance in our Saviour's hiſtory, which lie open to our judgment alſo. As the apoſtles have freely tranſmitted their own judgment of this matter, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that they would not have authenticated their judgment, by the more important evidence of their maſter, if they had ever heard him make ſuch a declaration, and therefore it is clear to me that he never did do ſo.

It does not appear, therefore, that our Lord, knowing the future infidelity and treachery of Judas, elected him into the number of the twelve; that we have a ſufficient authority, from ſcripture, to admit this ſuppoſition, much leſs to receive it as a matter of undoubted certainty,

and ſubject ourſelves to the difficulty of anſwering the objections, which ſpring out of this ſuppoſition. This principal difficulty being removed, therefore, the queſtion why our Lord did not openly detect, and inſtantly expel from his choſen attendants, ſo unworthy an aſſociate, as ſoon as the knowledge of him was revealed, is anſwered from that very wiſdom of our Saviour, which the queſtion would impeach. How would ſuch a treatment have appeared to the world, or even to his diſciples themſelves, to condemn for a crime, the evidence of which exiſted only in his own mind. This would have been to aſſume, not only the knowledge, but the judicial authority of God himſelf, nay, rather more than God himſelf does exerciſe towards delinquents in this world; and would have ſo reflected on the wiſdom, juſtice, and mildneſs of his character, as muſt have afforded the ſtrongeſt grounds of triumph to the determined enemies of his doctrine in his own day, and to thoſe in every day, who have vainly been endeavouring to find ſpecks and blemiſhes in his wiſe and blameleſs conduct.

Such is the ſolution which the preceding difficulties have received in my own mind, upon a free and honeſt examination of all the evidence which the ſcripture affords. I have purpoſely avoided the inquiring, how far the deſignation of ſuch a character as that of Judas, muſt be ſuppoſed from the univerſal fore-knowledge of the Deity, becauſe it is purely a queſtion of natural religion, which revelation has no proper concern with. It is ſufficient, if the ſcriptures ſhall

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be found not to have aſſerted the deſignation of Judas to the office he held, and the part he acted; and, therefore, have not made themſelves accountable for the fitneſs of ſuch an appointment.

Though I do not think that it would be any difficult matter for natural religion to reply to this queſtion, if ſhe were allowed to ſuppoſe ſuch an idea of the divine preſcience, as being conſiſtent with all the natural perfections of God, ſeems neceſſary to the character of his moral and accountable ſubjects. But chriſtianity ſtands oppoſed to deiſts, not to atheiſts; and in whatever manner any ſincere believer in God can account for the exiſtence of moral evil, for the admiſſion of the worſt of agents in the beſt of cauſes, in the ſame manner may he account for the exiſtence of Judas, for the admiſſion of ſuch an aſſociate in that benevolent and moral work on which Jeſus Chriſt was ſent into the world.

But perhaps a tenaciouſneſs of opinions already received, or a concern for what they may think to affect the honour of God and of his ſon, may make ſome offended with this account; but ere they take the reſolution of not changing their opinions, let them ſeriouſly and freely examine upon what foundation their opinions do ſtand, and what that neceſſity is, which their opinions plead for, to the maintaining the honour of God and of Jeſus Chriſt. Let them firſt be able to ſay to themſelves and to the public, for what wiſe and moral purpoſes God could deſign, and his ſon could elect into an office, a wretch devoted to act in the greateſt poſſible

oppoſition to the ſpirit and intention of that office. For my own part, I honeſtly confeſs that I can ſay nothing to ſuch a queſtion; and I do therefore truly rejoice, that neither revelation nor reaſon, when fairly conſulted, do put me to ſuch a difficulty.

Let us attend to ſome other reflections, which the hiſtory of Judas excites.

I have often wondered to what purpoſe was the treachery of Judas; of what neceſſity, what advantage to the Jewiſh rulers, was the part this diſciple acted, in order to the facilitating their purpoſes againſt the life of Jeſus Chriſt. Judas appears to have done nothing more than barely conduct their officers into his preſence, a matter ſurely of little conſequence to thoſe who thirſted after the life of this innocent perſon, and without which, it may well be ſuppoſed, that they could equally have perpetrated all their malice againſt him.

Jeſus Chriſt was not like a malefactor, flying from the terrors of Juſtice, and hiding his guilty head in dark and unknown retreats; in which caſe, the officious hand, that conducted his purſuers to his lurking place, might be the very thing that was wanting to bring him to puniſhment. He had never practiſed any concealment; he appeared every day in the face of the public, in their ſtreets, and in their temples, aſſiduouſly carrying on the work, for which he had come into the world, and which alone provoked all the vengeance of his enemies. He ſtood expoſed to their arreſt at any time, whenever they ſhould reſolve upon it; nor even, if they ſhould think

think it more convenient to ſeize him at night, is it credible, that the places of his retirement could be any myſtery, where no myſtery appears to have been intended, and perhaps impoſſible to have been effected. The number of his diſciples, who generally, if not conſtantly attended him, was too great to be concealed, and his regular appearance in public, during the day, muſt have rendered it a very eaſy matter, to trace him to his abode, during the night.

It is further a very material circumſtance, that his nightly retreat appears to have been generally the ſame; for it is expreſsly mentioned, that the placed to which Judas conducted the band, who ſeized his maſter, was that of his uſual reſort by night with his diſciples, and that it was the very circumſtance which led Judas to ſeek him there; it could hardly, therefore, have been unknown to many in Jeruſalem, at leaſt there could have been no difficulty in diſcovering it to thoſe who were intereſted in making the diſcovery. It does not appear, therefore, that the ſingle part which Judas took in the iniquity of his maſter's enemies, had any ſufficient, any important, any neceſſary end in view. May we not then conclude, that this traitor was deſigned by his employers, to have acted a ſtill further part, and had himſelf intended to have appeared a more conſiderable actor, in the tranſactions of the ſucceeding day, if his ſudden, and unexpected repentance, had not defeated the deſign.

It would have been a great point gained, in order to ſupport the appearance of diſintereſted

juſtice, and turn the popular prejudice againſt him, if one of his own diſciples ſhould ſtand forth his accuſer, and give teſtimony to the ſuppoſed crimes, which they meant to alledge againſt him.

The chief prieſts and elders, accuſed him to the Jewiſh nation, of a deſign againſt their religion, a deſign to overturn it from the foundation, and even to deſtroy that ſacred temple, in which they believed, all the majeſty and diſtinction of their nation to be lodged, a crime of the higheſt magnitude to a bigotted and ſuperſtitious Jew.

To the Romans they accuſed him of aſpiring and ambitious deſigns, to attack the ſovereignty of the empire of the world, and raiſe himſelf to a throne, as ſoon as he had ſufficiently ſecured the affections and confidence of the people. He might carry himſelf, indeed, with decency, with ſanctity, with humility, and moderation, but this might be urged as only a more deep and ſubtle hypocriſy, while the general expectation of the people, the flattering title of king which they had conferred upon him, being ſufficient to alarm the Roman jealouſy, if thereto ſhould be added the teſtimony of one of his choſen diſciples and confidants, who might be ſuppoſed to be acquainted with his moſt ſecret views, and this teſtimony affected to be given from a deteſtation of his criminal deſigns; then might they hope, and not without reaſon, to juſtify their proſecution to Rome and to their country, that every one would give credit to the charge, and join iſſue in the ſentence which ſhould

ſhould be pronounced againſt him; while themſelves, inſtead of being deteſted as the miniſters of injuſtice and oppreſſion, of a low, corrupted and revengeful malice, ſhould be applauded as doing a public ſervice to the civil and religious intereſts of their nation.

All this they might hope to derive from the teſtimony of ſo material an evidence; their ſcheme was then well concerted, and the wretched diſciple himſelf, if a traitor, would not be ſo to no end, but acquire, at leaſt, with his employers, no inconſiderable merit from his valuable ſervices. But the heart of Judas, bad as it was, failed him ere the completion of his treachery; and the rulers being now engaged in the eye of the public to ſupport their charge againſt this extraordinary perſonage, who had ſo much excited the attention of the whole nation, were obliged to carry it through as well as they could; and being diſappointed in this important evidence, they ſuborned others to bear the ſame teſtimony, which Judas, with more baſeneſs, indeed, but with more credit, was deſigned to have given.

Nor is it a ſufficient objection to this ſuppoſition, that the writers of the ſacred hiſtory have given no intimation of this further purpoſe in the treachery of Judas; ſince, if they had really been acquainted therewith, yet it is nothing wonderful that they ſhould omit to mention a circumſtance, which exiſted only in intention, and, therefore, contributed nothing to the condemnation and death of their Lord. I ſay it is nothing wonderful, that they ſhould omit to men-

tion ſuch a circumſtance in an hiſtory, which they have confeſſedly wrote in a very conciſe and ſummary way. But it is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe, nor, I will venture to add, very probable, that they were acquainted with the truth of this further intended treachery on the part of Judas, though, not improbable that they might have the ſame ideas of the nature of his perfidy that we have ſuggeſted. Whatever Judas was deſigned to act in the betraying of his maſter, it was a private contract between him and the chief of the Jews, which theſe iniquitous rulers had a manifeſt intereſt in concealing from the public knowledge.

This conjecture will, therefore, be allowed to carry a great probability with it, and obviate any objections which may be inferred from the inſignificance of Judas's treachery. Had the repentance of Judas not ſucceeded to the firſt act of his treachery, it would have been difficult to have accounted for the introduction of ſo uſeleſs a villain; but the proſecution of what ſuch a villain might further intend, being cut off by the unlooked-for revolt of his own mind, no one is authoriſed to queſtion the integrity of the ſacred hiſtorian upon the ſuppoſition that the whole of this falſe diſciple's perfidy is repreſented in the ſingle act of conducting the enemies of his maſter into his preſence. The narration of the hiſtorian has all the marks of inapprehenſive veracity, not of a fiction, betraying itſelf by its own inconſiſtencies. The evangeliſt faithfully narrates what Judas did perform; he ſeems to apprehend no difficulty in his account,

count, nor to have meditated any anſwer to what objections might be urged, but the ſequel of his hiſtory provides the anſwer; for it is left to candour to ſuppoſe, what ſuch a beginning of treachery might have produced, if conſcience had ſuffered the traitor to proceed.

But barely to find no inſuperable difficulty in the hiſtory of Judas is not ſufficient: the whole character of this traitor is no inconſiderable teſtimony to the innocence and uprightneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and to the truth of the chriſtian religion. Judas had no prejudice in favour of the cauſe in which his excellent maſter was engaged; but moſt probably would have rejoiced, and continued to have been his adherent, if he had found it to be the cauſe of an impoſtor, that is, of one who, under the appearance of public ſpirit, of a zeal for religion and for virtue, aimed only to attract the public notice, to play the part of an artful hypocrite, to flatter the univerſal prejudice which the Jewiſh nation had entertained of a temporal deliverer, and on the ſanguine hopes and wiſhes and affections of the people, raiſe himſelf to the height of worldly greatneſs.

Then, alſo, this unworthy diſciple might have hoped to ſucceed in the ambitious views which firſt drew him to join the followers of Jeſus Chriſt; but he found himſelf deceived: the whole converſation, inſtruction, and manners of his maſter diſcovered no worldly deſign, but the moſt poſitive renunciation of it; he propheſied nothing of himſelf at the hands of men, but contempt, perſecution and death; he promiſed nothing

nothing to his diſciples but to bear the ſame croſs, to drink of the ſame bitter cup; the whole breathed the ſpirit of humility, reſignation, and a mind mortified to the views and pleaſures of this world, by being wholly occupied with a regard to the ſublimer intereſts of that world which is to come. The ſordid earth-born ſpirit of Judas was ſhocked with ſuch a diſcovery, he renounced the cauſe in which his ambition could find no ground to reſt upon, and, like a low-minded villain, endeavoured to derive an advantage from his renunciation, to make a merit, and a gain of betraying the maſter, of whoſe uprightneſs he was ſorry to be convinced, into the hands of his malicious enemies.

This appears to be the plain and only account which can be given of the views, wherewith Judas firſt attached himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, continued for a while to appear as his follower, and of the motives which at length determined him to renounce a cauſe, which he had totally miſtaken. Nor was he the only diſciple who miſtook the deſign of the moral Redeemer of the world. The writers of his Life plainly enough teſtify of themſelves and of all their fellow-diſciples, that they had the ſame low worldly expectations from their leader; but a pure diſintereſted affection to their maſter, founded on his wiſdom, the virtues of his character, the amiableneſs of his temper, and a conviction that the favour and power of God was with him, grew up at length in their hearts, and however ſhocked at his repeated declarations that his kingdom had no view to this world,

but

but that he ſhould die the death of a criminal, yet were they too firmly attached to his perſon to deſert him; and this veneration, this affection for their Lord, gradually prepared their minds to entertain a veneration for thoſe real intereſts which he had in view, and at length to ſucceed their maſter in the ſame religious and moral work for which he lived and for which he died.

To ſay, then, that Judas had no other than an ambitious and worldly view in his attachment to Jeſus Chriſt, is ſaying little more of him than what we are authoriſed to ſay of the whole body of the diſciples: but their minds were capable of being enlightened with nobler views, that of Judas was not; they renounced the world, he renounced the cauſe, and endeavoured, in the way of treachery, to gratify ſome of thoſe ſordid views to which his whole ſoul was devoted. The deſertion of ſuch a diſciple from ſuch motives, and who, in the very act of his deſertion, diſcovered ſo baſe and ſordid a ſpirit, is, to me at leaſt, a very ſtrong atteſtation of the upright and good intentions wherewith Jeſus Chriſt ſhewed himſelf to the world, of that pure and honeſt regard which alone he profeſſed to have for the glory of God, and for the ſouls of men. I lament the fall of Judas, I am truly grieved that a tritor ſhould have been found in ſo ſmall a band of friends and confidants, but I rejoice to ſee it clearly proved thereby that an hypocrite, a low-born, mercenary, ambitious ſpirit, could find no encouragement to continue the friend and confidant of my lord and maſter Jeſus Chriſt.

But

But it is not only by the deſertion, by the betraying of his maſter, that Judas convinces us of the goodneſs of that cauſe which he forſook, but in the ſequel, he gives direct and expreſs teſtimony to the innocence of his betrayed Lord. He gives this teſtimony in that affecting ſtate of mind which cannot lie, and he ſets a fatal, but indiſputable ſeal to the truth of his teſtimony. The worldly views which had poſſeſſed the minds of the other diſciples, were ſubdued by the incomparable virtues of their maſter; the heart of Judas needed the reflection of the blackeſt crime, to bring it to any ſenſe of right; he feels not any veneration for his Lord, till, like an aſſaſſin, he has ſtabbed him; a moment he views the irrevocable deed, and conſcience flings the injuſtice, the ingratitude of it in his face; the world and all its vile temptations are extinguiſhed within him; violated truth, injured innocence, ſtand in awful majeſty before him; driven by a black repentance, he hurries into the preſence of his deteſted employers, confeſſes the horrid part which he had acted, proclaims his maſter's innocence and worth, indignantly throws back the hire of his villainy, and deſperately cuts himſelf off from a world, the love of which had cut him off from all goodneſs, and from all happineſs.

This is ſuch a teſtimony, and ſo confirmed, as methinks is fitted to ſpeak with power to the moſt prejudiced mind. Aſſuredly, the repentant wretch, uttered in that bitter moment, what he felt at his heart, and what he felt he knew; he had ſeen his maſter in private, as well as in public,

public, he had enjoyed his confidence, he was well acquainted with his whole deſigns; alas! he had found nothing therein but what frowned upon the baſeneſs of his own deſigns. This diſciple, this friend, this confidant of Jeſus Chriſt, whom only the virtues of Jeſus Chriſt had driven to deſert and to betray him, proclaims before the rulers of the Jews, *I have ſinned*; *I have betrayed innocent blood*; and however abandoned to wickedneſs he may ſeem in the general view of his character, conſcience is at length ſo awakened in him, that he confirms his teſtimony, beyond the poſſibility of doubt, by the deſperate evidence of ſelf-murder.

How wiſely ordered is the conſtitution of the human mind, even when viewed in its worſt examples! How wonderfully does the providence of God produce good out of the greateſt evils, and compel villains to give teſtimony to that very cauſe of truth and goodneſs, which, from the corruptneſs of their hearts they have been endeavouring to deſtroy.

Let us, however, rejoice in a cauſe, rejoice in a maſter, whoſe truth and uprightneſs triumphed at length even over ſuch a mind as that of Judas; and though the miſerable fate of this loſt man may excite that pity which is natural to the human heart, yet let us rejoice, that even from him we have an evidence to confirm us in the faith of that divine teacher, whom Judas betrayed.

ERASTUS.

Further

Further Thoughts concerning the Perſon of Chriſt, occaſioned by the Poſtſcript to the Remarks on Dr. Lardner's Letter on the Logos. See Theological Repoſitory, Vol. I. p. 442, 443.

THAT man was deſigned by his Maker to be the head of this lower world, is evident, not only from the expreſs declarations of ſcripture (Gen. i. 26, 28.—ix. 1, 2. Pſalm ix. 5, 8.) but from the ſuperior power and faculties with which he is endowed: And it, doubtleſs becomes him to have ſuch a ſenſe of the dignity and prerogatives of his rational nature, as may induce him to act a wiſe and manly part, and thus to anſwer the end of his creation. But it would argue great ignorance, or great arrogance in him to ſuppoſe, that all nature was framed, and is ſuſtained, only or chiefly, for his uſe; and that he, in a manner, engroſſes the care of the common Father and Lord of all. Such an imagination muſt appear peculiarly abſurd to thoſe who have formed any juſt ideas of the amazing extent of the univerſe, and of the vaſt number and variety, magnitude and diſtances of the heavenly bodies; eſpecially conſidering how little reaſon there is to doubt, but that, amidſt this immenſity of the divine works, there are numberleſs habitable worlds, ſome of which may contain creatures of a rank and order far ſuperior to the human race; to ſay nothing of what may be conjectured concerning

cerning the world of ſpirits, or how, and by what beings, the illimitable etherial regions may be peopled.

But if this world and its inhabitants are ſo mean and inconſiderable, compared with the whole univerſe of beings, corporeal and intellectual; can we conceive it in any degree probable, that the firſt and greateſt of all ſpirits, next to the one ſupreme, ſhould be ſent by his heavenly Father, not only to take up his abode for ſome conſiderable time amongſt us, but to aſſume our nature, to lead a life of labour and ſorrow, and to die a moſt ignominious and excruciating death, for the redemption of our ſinful race; whether it ſhould, or ſhould not be ſuppoſed, that other worlds have been redeemed at the like expenſive rate?

This difficulty has been urged by ſome of our modern deiſts, as an inſuperable objection againſt the great goſpel doctrine of man's redemption by Chriſt the ſon of God. (See particularly a ſhort article in the Gentleman's Magazine for May 1760, where the objection was ſtated, and an anſwer deſired; though I cannot ſay that any, deſerving the name, was returned.) But it ſhould be remembered, that it affects that doctrine only on the ſuppoſition that Jeſus Chriſt, in his own proper nature and perſon, was before his incarnation a ſuper-angelic ſpirit, and had naturally exiſted in a ſtate of inconceivable glory, with the Father, before the creation of the world. On every other hypotheſis, whether the ſtrict Trinitarian, Sabellian, or Socinian, it was the man Chriſt Jeſus alone,

who

who voluntarily ſubmitted to undergo ſuch labours, indignities, and ſufferings on our behalf. For, however intimately united he might be with the in-dwelling Deity, and whatever dignity and efficacy his mediatorial undertaking might derive from this union, it is allowed, on all hands, that the Deity himſelf is immutable and impaſſible: And though the meaneſt of his creatures are in no dange of being overlooked, or diſregarded by him, but are always the object of his condeſcending notice, and tender care; yet, in every view in which he can be conſidered by us, he muſt appear abſolutely incapable of any real abaſement or ſuffering.

The objection, indeed, is acknowledged to have its weight, by ſome ingenious and valuable authors, who have been advocates for that notion concerning the perſon of Chriſt, on which it is mainly grounded: Particularly by Dr. Clarke, in his ſermons at Boyle's Lectures, p. 348. 353. and by Dr. Taylor in his *Key to St. Paul's epiſtles*, p. 131. 133. But the former, in what he has offered, by way of anſwer, has rather increaſed, than leſſened the difficulty, by ſuppoſing that the Divine Logos (which became the human ſoul of Chriſt) may be ſent to other parts of the univerſe, for the like purpoſes with that which occaſioned his deſcent into our world: And the latter, in order to remove the objection, has carried the notion of the dignity of human nature, and the merit of human virtue to a ſeemingly unwarrantable and extravagant height.

The writer of the *Remarks on Dr. Lardner's Letter*, in his poſtſcript, introduces an objection againſt

againſt his favourite ſcheme, as ſaying, "Con-
"ſider that this world is but a point in compa-
"riſon of the immenſity of the divine works;
"and who can imagine that ſo great a being
"as you repreſent our bleſſed Lord, ſhould be
"ſo deeply abaſed on account of it?" To which he thinks a ſufficient anſwer had been ſuggeſted before, perhaps under the eighth article of his Remarks, relating to the reward of our Saviour's voluntary degradation and ſufferings. Without repeating here the animadverſions that were made on thoſe Remarks, as they came under conſideration, I ſhall only further obſerve, that whatever additional happineſs ſo great and illuſtrious a being might be ſuppoſed to receive on the completion of our redemption; our minds muſt ſurely recoil at the thought of his being frequently ſubjected to ſuch humbling and painful undertakings, as often as the diſordered ſtate of other habitable worlds might need a like remedy. Yet, as there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that amongſt a countleſs multitude of ſuch worlds, this of ours ſhould be the only one where ſin has gained an entrance; ſo we can imagine nothing ſo peculiar in our nature, character, ſituation and circumſtances, as to require an interpoſition of the moſt glorious of all derived beings in our behalf, more than others.

To thoſe who may think the difficulty not ſatisfactorily removed by what was before offered, the remarker propoſes another ſcheme, which he ſtiles *a Novel Opinion*, as "giving the only "ſolution that can be conceived, conſiſtent with "reaſon and ſcripture," viz. "that our Lord

" Chriſt is the next being to the Supreme, with " whom the inhabitants of this globe, or per- " haps of the ſolar ſyſtem, have any connection " or concern." This ſcheme, it muſt be confeſſed, would greatly leſſen, though not entirely remove the objection that lies againſt the notion of our Lord's pre-exiſtence: And if the texts which are ſuppoſed to favour that notion, could not admit of a different interpretation, I ſhould readily embrace it, as preferable, in that reſpect, at leaſt, to the Arian hypotheſis.

In point of evidence, indeed, this writer thinks it not comparable to his own ſcheme, though far more defenſible than that which he oppoſes; having probably in his view thoſe texts which ſpeak of *all things*, without exception, as *made by the word*; of *God's making the worlds by his Son*, and, *creating all things by Jeſus Chriſt*; of *all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible*, as *created by him and for him*; who is accordingly declared to be *the firſt born of every creature, before all things*, and him *by whom all things conſiſt*. (John i. 3—10. iii. 31. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 15—17. Heb. i. 2, 3.) However, ſuppoſing theſe texts are to be underſtood of a proper creation, what the extent of that creation was, might be juſtly queſtioned; ſince it is very common with the ſacred writers to uſe ſuch univerſal terms, when they muſt needs be taken with great reſtrictions; and it ſeems to be quite foreign to the deſign of a divine revelation, calculated for making us wiſe unto ſalvation, to acquaint us with what has no relation to the higheſt

higheſt intereſts and concerns of mankind. The expreſſion, it muſt be confeſſed, is peculiarly ſtrong, John i. 3. But the queſtion is, what we are there to underſtand by the Divine Word? Whether it denotes the perſon of Chriſt, or the wiſdom, power or ſpirit of God himſelf, that afterwards dwelt in the man Chriſt Jeſus. (See Lardner's Lett. p. 24, 25.

As to the texts above referred to in the epiſtles of St. Paul, if with Grotius, Locke and others, we underſtand them in a figurative ſenſe, of the new creation, ſpiritual formation, or renovation of things according to the goſpel conſtitution, or of that great change of affairs that was introduced by Chriſt with reſpect to religion, when the believing Gentiles were admitted into the church or kingdom of God under him as their head, and even the angelic hierarchies were made ſubject unto him. 1 Pet. iii. 22. (And it is certain that St. Paul, elſewhere, ſpeaks of the work of redemption under the name and notion of a creation, as 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. Eph. ii. 10, 15. &c.) This will entirely ſet aſide the arguments drawn from thence in favour of the pre-exiſtent ſcheme in general, as well as take away the pretended advantage of the Arian hypotheſis above the novel ſcheme, in point of evidence. See Lardner's Letter, p. 64, 72. Locke on 1 Cor. viii. 6. and Eph. iii. 9. Calvin on Eph. iii. 9. Grotius on Col. i. 15, &c. and Heb. i. 2. See alſo Dawſon's Sermons at Lady Moyers's Lectures, p. 186. 201.)

It muſt, indeed, be acknowledged, that nothing can furniſh us with ſo aſtoniſhing an inſtance of humiliation and condeſcenſion, or give us ſuch an amazing view of God's love to mankind, as the Arian ſcheme carried to its utmoſt height. But we may be allowed to conſider, whether it does not ſhoot beyond the mark; whether it does not rather confound the mind, than affect it with juſt and proper ſentiments; and whether it is not more ſuited to the now generally exploded notion of God's requiring a kind of infinite ſatisfaction to his injured juſtice, before he could ſhew mercy to ſinful men, than to any ſcriptural repreſentations of the nature and method of our redemption. (See Lardner's Lett. p. 40. 47.) It is ſurely no recommendation of any doctrine to an intelligent inquirer, that it is ſtrange, and hard to be conceived. And it may well be queſtioned, whether a mind, unbiaſſed by prejudice, could eaſily take up with the notion of an inferior god employed by the Supreme, in creating the whole univerſe—a ſecond proper object of religious worſhip—adored by angels as their lord in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, and yet becoming, for a while, no more than a mere mortal man;—the moſt exalted of all ſpirits, next the one infinite and independent being, "to whom all divine "powers are attributed, excepting abſolute inde-"pendency and ſupremacy," leaving the joys and glories of heaven to dwell in this world, impriſoned in a fleſhly tabernacle, ſubject to all human frailties and infirmities; which, ſeparate from the agonies of crucifixion "muſt (accord-"ing

« ing to Biſhop Clayton) be, literally ſpeaking, « to ſuch a being, an hell upon earth;"—and all this for the benefit of ſo inconſiderable a part of the creation as the human race, who might (ſo far as we can apprehend) have received the ſame advantages by a fellow man, divinely taught, commiſſioned, impowered, and advanced, as he was;—whilſt, in all probability, many other worlds, inhabited by beings no more indefectible than we, might no leſs need a like interpoſition in their behalf.

It is true, unlikely as this ſcheme may appear in itſelf, and unable as we may be to ſolve the difficulties attending it, there is no ſuch direct abſurdity in it, as would warrant us to reject it, were it clearly and fully aſſerted in the goſpel revelation; the poſitive evidences of which are ſo ſtrong, as not to be ſhaken by any mere difficulties or improbabilities. But though there are, indeed, ſeveral texts in the goſpel of St. John, and in ſome of St. Paul's epiſtles, that, in their more obvious and literal acceptation, ſeem to favour the ſcheme, or, at leaſt, the notion of Chriſt's pre-exiſtence; yet it is a very obſervable circumſtance, that in the other three goſpels, the book of Acts, and the epiſtles of James, Peter, John and Jude, there is no hint that could lead thoſe, for whoſe uſe they were written, to entertain ſuch an opinion. This makes it highly probable, that the language in thoſe texts is ſtrongly figurative, as it certainly is in a great part of both the Old and New Teſtament; and may help to juſtify thoſe interpretations of them which ſome are apt to condemn as forced and

and unnatural, but which are, perhaps, the real reſult of *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*, after the apoſtle's example, as Grotius and Mr. Locke, in their interpretations of ſcripture, moſt eminently did.

Few, if any of theſe texts, are paſſed by unnoticed by the venerable author of the Letter of 1730. How far his ſhort gloſſes on them may be ſufficient to invalidate the arguments that have been drawn from them by others, every reader muſt judge for himſelf. The ingenious writer of theſe remarks ſeems to eſtimate their value at a low rate; but many who were formerly in a different way of thinking, have entertained a better opinion of this work; and have found ſomething in it that has induced them firſt to queſtion the truth of their old notions, and afterwards to give them up as untenable. I have often thought it very remarkable, that the trinitarians, who have been uſed to oppoſe every attempt to revive or ſupport the Arian cauſe, with all the bitterneſs of zeal, ſhould have been ſo ſilent on the publication of this Letter, Mr. Lowman's three Tracts, and ſome later pieces, wherein the unitarian ſcheme, moſt properly ſo called, has been maintained with a manly freedom, but guarded, indeed, from all appearances of a deſign to leſſen the authority of the ſacred records, or betray the intereſts of our common chriſtianity. Poſſibly this ſcheme may be eſteemed by them leſs obnoxious than the Arian, as it perhaps ſhould be. And it may be reaſonably expected, that the more a taſte for ſimplicity in religion prevails, and the paſſion for what is aſtoniſhing and incredible

ſubſidies

ſubſides, the nearer we ſhall approach again to the truth as it is in Jeſus, from whence we had, by degrees, moſt ſtrangely deviated.

Theſe writings appear to me well adapted to reconcile or calm the angry diſputes and contentions that have ſo long divided the chriſtian world, on the ſubjects they relate to. Here, on the one hand, is no pretenſion to any real and proper diſtinction of *perſons* in the divine nature (a term unſcriptural, and inexplicable as uſed in this controverſy) but that great and leading article of religion, the unity and ſupremacy of God the univerſal Father, is no leſs ſtrenuouſly, and, I think, more conſiſtently, aſſerted and defended, than by the Arians themſelves; without the embarraſſment of the difficulties above-mentioned, attending their doctrine of the glorious pre-exiſtent ſpirit of our Lord, having all its exalted powers reduced to the ſtate and compaſs of a mere human infant. On the other hand, the Logos, the word or wiſdom of God, which dwelt in Chriſt, and that ſpirit of power and grace, which was communicated to him by his heavenly Father, without meaſure, whereby he was abundantly qualified for the whole of his mediatorial undertaking; are allowed, on this ſcheme, to be as truly divine in the higheſt ſenſe, as the moſt zealous trinitarian can pretend; though without the abſurdity of ſuppoſing three proper divine perſons, *i. e.* intelligent agents or beings, to ſubſiſt in the unity of the divine nature. Here, indeed, is room for ſuch a diſtinction of names, characters and offices, as the ſcriptures point out, and the Sabellians

plead for, under the appellation of *perſons*. But then, as there is no neceſſity or reaſon for following them in ſo vague and improper an application of this term; ſo neither need we call that union of Chriſt with the indwelling Deity, ſo often ſpoken of in the New Teſtament, a perſonal or hypoſtatic union, as they do: Nor is it the *Divine Word* only, (whatever may be particularly meant by that name or diſtinction) but God himſelf, even under the character of *the Father*, that is repreſented in ſeveral places as in ſome very peculiar manner united to the man Chriſt Jeſus, and working in and by him; whilſt in others the wonderful knowledge and wiſdom he poſſeſſed, and the power he exerted, are aſcribed to *the ſpirit of God*, (John v. 19—27 36—38. viii. 18, 28, 29. x. 28—30, 38. xiv. 7—11, 20. xvi. 32. xvii. 11, 20—23. Acts ii. 22. Col. i. 19. ii. 3, 9. Matt. iii. 16. John i. 32—34. iii. 34, 35. Compare Iſa. xi. 1—3. xlii. 1—4. lxi. 1—3. Matt. xii. 17. Luke iv. 18, 19. Acts x. 38.)

After all, however, that has hitherto been advanced in the controverſy concerning the perſon of Chriſt, it can ſcarcely be pretended, that the ſubject is yet cleared of all doubts and difficulties, to whatever ſcheme we may give the preference; nor is it likely that the controverſy will ſoon be ended. But inſtead of being greatly ſolicitous, to aſcertain what ſeems to be not fully determined in ſcripture, on this head, we ſhall do well to turn our chief attention to thoſe points, which are confeſſedly more certain, and more important. Whether our bleſſed Lord had any real

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and perſonal exiſtence, and if ſo, in what manner he exiſted, before his virgin mother conceived him, has been, and may ſtill be a matter of doubtful diſputation: But the ſacred writers have left us no room at all to doubt of his miraculous and divine conception; of the high and important commiſſion with which he was charged, and of his abundant qualifications for the execution of it, by "the communication of the ſpirit to him without meaſure, or the indwelling of his Father's fulneſs." And not only in theſe reſpects, was he glorioufly diſtinguiſhed from all other men, but alſo by the peerleſs dignity and rectitude of his character and conduct on earth; by the ſeveral extraordinary teſtimonies that were given him of his heavenly Father's moſt peculiar regards; and alſo, by the high honours conferred upon him, as the reward of his perfect obedience, and voluntary ſufferings, in his ſpeedy reſurrection from the dead, to die no more, in his viſible aſcenſion to heaven, and in his conſequent exaltation to a ſtate of regal dominion, and judicial authority over angels as well as men, ſo that *he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf, and to ſave them to the uttermoſt, who come unto God by him.* And if we are fully convinced of theſe truths, on which our Lord himſelf and his apoſtles appear to have laid the greateſt ſtreſs, and beyond which the earlieſt creeds aſſert nothing concerning him, we cannot want ſufficient reaſons and motives, to excite us to all that veneration, love and gratitude, obedience, imitation and truſt, which

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are due to him as the beloved ſon of God, the teacher and pattern, the friend and ſaviour, the prince and judge of men.

CHARISTES.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

Amidſt the diſtractions of party and politics, and the ravages of diſſipation, pleaſure and vanity, upon every thing ſerious, it ſeems, that you, Gentlemen, do not yet deſpair of the commonwealth *of ſacred literature. I honour you for your courage; and as I doubt not that the characters and principles of your readers do you great honour, ſo I hope their numbers and communications will ſufficiently ſupport your deſign. If you judge the annexed paper likely to prove acceptable to any of them, it is ſubmitted to your diſpoſal, by*

Your humble ſervant,

EUSEBIUS.

Some Obſervations on St. Paul's Diſcourſe at Athens. Acts, ch. xvii.

THE late Reverend and learned Dr. Lardner, in the third volume of his collection of Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, p. 20. quotes the following remarkable paſſage, concerning *Epimenides* from *Diogenes Laertius*. "At this "time the fame of Epimenides was very great "among all the Greeks, and he was ſuppoſed

"to

"to be in great favour with the gods. The "Athenians being afflicted with a peſtilence, "were directed by the Pythian oracle to get "their city purified by expiation. They, "therefore, ſent Nicias, ſon of Niceratus, in a "ſhip to Crete, inviting Epimenides to come "to them. He coming thither in the forty-"ſixth Olympiad, purified their city, and de-"livered them from the peſtilence in this man-"ner. Taking ſeveral ſheep, ſome black, "others white, he had them up to the Areo-"pagus; and thence let them go where they "would, and gave orders to thoſe who followed "them, wherever any one of them ſhould lie "down, to ſacrifice it to the god, to whom it "belonged; and ſo the plague ceaſed. Hence "it has come to paſs, that to this preſent time "may be found in the boroughs of the Athe-"nians, *anonymous altars*, a memorial of the "expiation then made."

It ought to be obſerved, that Epimenides flouriſhed almoſt ſix hundred years before Chriſt, and Diogenes Laertius, who witneſſes that anonymous altars, a memorial of the expiation made by Epimenides, remained in the boroughs (κατα τυς δημυς) of the Athenians, wrote about the beginning of the third century after Chriſt, conſequently theſe altars muſt have been there when Paul was at Athens; and it ſeems highly probable, that one of them was that which the apoſtle had obſerved, and takes notice of in the beginning of his diſcourſe.

The doctor produces the teſtimony of Chryſoſtom, and Iſidore of Peluſium, to confirm the apoſtle's

ſtle's repreſentation of the inſcription, *To the unknown God.* Theophylact and Oecumenius alſo read it in the ſingular number; only Jerome reads it in the plural, and thereupon grounds one of thoſe conceits, of which he and others of the venerable ancients ſeem to have been too fond. However, theſe three laſt mentioned writers ſay, that the whole inſcription on the altars was thus: *To the Gods of Aſia, and Europe, and Lybia, to the unknown and ſtrange God.* Or as Jerome reads, *unknown and ſtrange Gods.*

But it appears to me, that this could not poſſibly be the inſcription on the altars, which were erected in conſequence of Epimenides's directions for expiating the plague; becauſe it ſeems plain from the whole of Laertius's account, that the *Theoſophiſt* himſelf was quite uncertain what god had inflicted the peſtilence, and conſequently was to be appeaſed; whether *celeſtial, terreſtrial,* or *infernal.* But, as ſome of the gods were ſuppoſed to be beſt pleaſed with white victims, others with black ones, therefore he ordered a number of ſheep, ſome white, ſome black, to be turned looſe from Areopagus, and wherever each of them lay down it was to be ſacrificed on that ſpot, τω προσηκοντι θεω, *to the god to whom it belonged*; ſuch a general inſcription, therefore, as that given above, could by no means ſuit to altars erected on ſuch an occaſion as this; nor indeed any inſcription, but that which the apoſtle mentions; *To the unknown God.* When afterwards, either the public, or any particular perſon, might think proper to erect an altar to all the gods whom the laws of the ſtate allowed,

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the inſcription on ſuch altars might very properly be, *To the Gods of Europe, and Aſia, and Africa, and to the unknown and ſtrange God, i. e.* the God, whoever he be, to whom, by Epimenides's direction, altars were erected for purifying the city, and whoever afterwards was one of the lawful Deities. After ſuch a tranſaction as that recorded concerning Epimenides, no wonder that the *unknown God*, became much celebrated and venerated at Athens, and that he ſhould often be honoured by the religious ceremonies of its inhabitants for a long time; not improbably, Theophylact, &c. might miſtake one of theſe latter altars for that more ancient one to which Paul refers. Dr. Preſcot, the learned maſter of Catherine Hall, in Cambridge, in a diſſertation publiſhed the beginning of this year, entitled *Paul at Athens*, obſerves, that Pauſanias and Philoſtratus, ſpeak of ſeveral altars at Athens, with the plural number inſcription, θεοις αγνωστοις; but he gives us not the paſſages; which, however, Lardner ſupplies, p. 27. 'Having mentioned an altar of Jupiter Olympius, Pauſanias adds, "and nigh unto it is *an altar* of unknown gods." He does not ſay *the altar*, but *an altar*. Therefore there may have been ſeveral ſuch altars, as Laertius ſays. And when he ſays *an altar of unknown gods*, he need not be underſtood to mean, that the inſcription was in the plural number; it may have been, and probably was in the ſingular.'

'In another place, Pauſanias ſpeaks of *altars of gods called unknown, and of heroes, and of the ſons of Theſeus at Phalerus*. The inſcription of theſe

'altars

'altars likewiſe may have been in the ſingular 'number. But as there were ſeveral altars at 'Athens, or near it, inſcribed *To the unknown* 'God, it was natural enough for ſome writers 'to call them *altars of unknown Gods:* So ſays 'Grotius. When Pauſanias ſays, that there were 'at Athens *altars of unknown Gods*; he means, 'that there were many altars with ſuch an in-'ſcription, *To the unknown God*; though poſſibly 'there were ſome with an inſcription in the plural 'number, whilſt others were in the ſingular.'

I beg leave to add, that perhaps Pauſanias (who wrote about the latter end of the ſecond century, and, conſequently, almoſt eight hundred years after the erection of the altars of Epimenides) ſeeing that there were ſeveral altars in Athens, and the neighbourhood, inſcribed to the unknown god, and not having learned ſufficiently their origin and hiſtory, might imagine them dedicated to ſo many different unknown gods, and, thereby, be led to ſpeak of them in the plural number. The ſame ignorance and miſtake might poſſibly occaſion plural inſcriptions in the latter ages of Athens. However, Dr. Lardner thinks that we have no proof or evidence, that there were any altars at Athens inſcribed to *unknown gods*, in the plural number.

'Philoſtratus records it, as an obſervation of 'Apollonius Tyanæus, "that we are never to 'ſpeak diſreſpectfully of any of the gods; in-'timating alſo, at the ſame time, that there was 'ſome ſpecial reaſon to be upon the guard in 'that reſpect at Athens, where are altars to un-'known demons." The ſame obſervations will 'ſuit with this paſſage as with the preceding,

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'from Pauſanias. We are alſo hereby led to 'think, that inſcriptions *To the unknown god*, were 'peculiar to the Athenians.'

It cannot reaſonably be objected, that in the paſſage quoted above, Laertius only calls them *anonymous altars*, but does not ſay that they were inſcribed *to the unknown god*. By *anonymous* we are only to underſtand, that they were not inſcribed with the name of any *particular* deity; not that they had no inſcription at all. Every altar muſt be inſcribed with the name of the divinity to whom it was dedicated, if that name was known; but if it was apprehended that ſome divinity was concerned whoſe name was not known (as appears, from the whole ſtory, to have been the caſe on this ſolemn occaſion of the purification of the city) then the proper inſcription of an altar, dedicated to ſuch divinity, could only be *to the unknown god*, and this would be, in the proper ſenſe of the word, an *anonymous* altar.

On the whole, it ſeems highly probable, that the altar to which St. Paul refers, was one of thoſe which had been erected, almoſt ſix hundred years before, in conſequence of the directions given by Epimenides for expiating or purifying the city in a time of the peſtilence, which, as the hiſtorian adds, *ceaſed* thereupon.

This paſſage of Diogenes Laertius, Dr. Lardner thinks, will mightily illuſtrate the introductory part of the apoſtle's diſcourſe to the Athenians; I beg leave to add, and even the whole diſcourſe itſelf.

When the apoſtle happened to caſt his eye on an altar with ſo uncommon an inſcription, it would be very natural for him (unleſs his own extenſive

extenſive acquaintance with the Greek writers and hiſtory had already informed him) to inquire into the reaſon and hiſtory of its erection; and having learned it, he would not fail to be much affected with it, and perceive the improvement which might be made of it. When, therefore, he was brought before the ſupreme court of Areopagus, and examined, *What this new doctrine whereof thou ſpeakeſt is? For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things to our ears: we would know therefore what theſe things mean.* The apoſtle very prudently and properly takes the exordium of his ſpeech from a reference to a well-known fact in the hiſtory of their ſtate, and a conſtitution of their ancient laws. *As I paſſed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inſcription, To the unknown god.* Upon his mentioning this inſcription, all his auditors would immediately recollect the altars which had been anciently raiſed for the purification of the city from a peſtilence by the direction of Epimenides, and would not doubt that he meant one of them. To what a height, then, muſt their attention and curioſity be raiſed, when Paul added, *Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.* With what eagerneſs would they liſten to one who profeſſed to inſtruct them, *who* and *what* that divinity was, by whoſe power and goodneſs ſo important a benefit had formerly been conferred on their ſtate (of which theſe altars remained as memorials) but whom even *Epimenides*, their counſellor, did not know, and ſucceeding generations had ſtill continued ignorant of.

Paul

Paul then proceeds to explain to them the doctrine concerning the one true God,* the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth, and all things in them; unlimited, omnipreſent, all-ſufficient, the giver of all good to all his creatures,

* I can by no means concur in Dr. Preſcot's opinion, that the Athenians worſhipped the Supreme Deity under the character and title of *the maker of heaven and earth*, and that the altars bearing the inſcription *To the unknown God*, were meant to be dedicated to him. He thinks that the apoſtle's words in the beginning of his diſcourſe, *God that made the world, &c.* lead to this opinion, as ſetting out with a title and character of God which the Athenians admitted. But they appear to me rather to prove the contrary; for after he had formally profeſſed to declare unto them an *unknown God, whom they ignorantly worſhipped*, had he begun that declaration with aſcribing to him, a title and character they univerſally admitted, and under which they worſhipped the Supreme God of the univerſe, they muſt immediately have laughed at him as impertinent and abſurd.

Neither can I aſſent to his conjecture, that ſuch altars were intended in honour of the God of the Jews; for though the Athenians might adopt ſome of the civil inſtitutions of the Hebrew law into their code, it by no means follows that they would in any degree, admit their religion, which, if they conceived any true notions of it, they could not but perceive that it was utterly incompatible with the whole ſyſtem of their theology and religious ceremonies, and that it would be very unpolitic to put the people upon inquiries after this God and his religion, by introducing into the ſtate, either his name or any ceremonies in honour of him. Should it be ſuggeſted, that ſome wiſe man, or philoſopher, might have erected an altar to the Supreme God with this obſcure inſcription; let it be remembered, that the laws of Athens did not allow private perſons to introduce new deities or ceremonies unapproved of by the ſtate, and that it was an univerſally received maxim among the philoſophers, which modern moderation alſo hath adopted, *to think* with the wiſe, but *to worſhip* as the laws direct.

the father and benefactor of all nations of men, who diſpoſeth of them and regulateth all events concerning them by his powerful and all-governing providence, with a view that, by theſe evidences of his interpoſitions in their affairs, men might be led to inquire after, diſcover and acknowledge the ever preſent Deity, in whom they live and move and have their beings. Evidences which had, in fact, led the moſt thoughtful of them to embrace and profeſs ſuch maxims as would have afforded a juſt foundation, whereon to raiſe more noble and refined ſentiments of him, than had hitherto been entertained, and to perceive the abſurdity of the idolatry which had hitherto prevailed.

But I will enter no further into the particulars. An attentive reader, who conſiders the apoſtle's diſcourſe in the light mentioned above, will, I think, perceive new beauty and force in each part of it; and what ſtrong convictions it muſt impreſs on the minds of its auditors, that the great Being, of whom theſe doctrines are true, muſt undoubtedly have interpoſed, as in all others, ſo in thoſe important events whereof the altars in queſtion were authentic memorials.

I ſhall but juſt hint the two following reflections.

1. That it is ſtrictly true, that Paul did declare to the Athenians that unknown God, whom they had before ignorantly worſhipped. Even him by whoſe providence the peſtilence was removed.

2. We have here a remarkable example of the all-governing wiſdom of him *who determineth the times*

times before appointed, in cauſing ſuch a preparation to be made, ſo long beforehand, for the more advantageous and effectual publication, at Athens, of the true doctrine concerning himſelf, and of the goſpel of his ſon Jeſus, in due ſeaſon.

Chriſt's Apoſtles, a Rule to Chriſtians, how to think and ſpeak of him.

I Have often thought that the manner in which our Lord's apoſtles ſpoke of and preached their divine maſter and his goſpel to the world, was a ſafe and proper directory for others, his followers, how to think and ſpeak of him.

St. Luke, in his ſecond treatiſe, improperly ſtiled the Acts of the Apoſtles, has preſerved to us a hiſtory of the firſt preaching of the goſpel, to Jews and Gentiles, by the apoſtles, and apoſtolic men, after our Lord's reſurrection from the dead, and the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt to qualify them for that great work.

Out of this book of St. Luke's, I have here made a collection of all thoſe paſſages in which the Lord Jeſus is expreſsly named; that by conſidering and comparing them all together, it may the more eaſily be ſeen, what ſentiments the apoſtles themſelves entertained, and what they taught others concerning the divine founder of our faith.

Not that we are to be determined by what is delivered in this ſingle book, but in all the inſpired writings together, which ſpeak of Chriſt, and which hold the ſame uniform language con-

cerning him; which muſt be conſiſtent, otherwiſe it could not be true.

Acts, chap. i. St. Luke, in his introduction, continues the hiſtory of the ſame Jeſus, of whoſe miraculous birth, life, death, reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven, he had ſpoken in his former treatiſe, with the addition of ſome further particulars of his abode upon earth till he was taken up into heaven, and his commanding them, v. 4. *That they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which (ſaith he) ye have heard of me.*

Chap. ii. *Jeſus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt,* pours forth upon his apoſtles the gift of the Holy Spirit, or ſanctifying power of God, to qualify them for their great undertaking, of enlightening and reforming a dark and abandoned world. N. B. The ſame Holy Spirit had before, in like manner, been beſtowed upon the Lord Jeſus, at his baptiſm.

Peter, in his firſt ſermon to his countrymen—v. 22, &c. *Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth,* a man *approved of God among you by miracles and ſigns which God did by him in the midſt of you—him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain—This Jeſus, of the ſeed of David, hath God raiſed up; whereof we are witneſſes.*—v. 36. *Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.*

Chap. iii. A lame man reſtored by Peter, in the name of Jeſus of Nazareth, or by virtue of that

that power which he had received from God to communicate to his apoſtles.

Peter's ſecond ſermon, like the former, with this addition, that, at v. 22. he ſpeaks of the Lord Jeſus as a prophet like unto Moſes, and v. 25. as being of the ſeed of Abraham.

Chap. iv. Peter, convened before the Jewiſh council, boldly declares, that the cure wrought upon the lame man above-mentioned, was by the name of Jeſus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raiſed from the dead; and that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.

V. 24, &c. The prayer of the apoſtles is deciſive, that the Holy Jeſus, was the child or ſervant of that God who made the world.

Chap. v. ver. 30. Jeſus, whom the Jews had ſlain and crucified, raiſed from the dead and exalted to be a prince and a ſaviour. V. 42. Jeſus, the Chriſt, the great prophet foretold and promiſed.

Chap. vii. v. 52. Stephen accuſes his countrymen of betraying and murdering that righteous perſon foretold by the prophets. V. 55, 59. Stephen ſees the Lord Jeſus, in his exalted ſtate, at the right hand of God, and recommends himſelf, at his death, to his care and protection.

Chap. viii. v. 35. Philip preaches Jeſus from Iſaiah liii. to the Ethiopian eunuch.

Chap. x. Peter, in his diſcourſe with Cornelius, informs him of the holy character of Jeſus of Nazareth; of the divine powers given to him by Almighty God; of his raiſing him from the

dead, and ordaining him to be the judge of quick and dead.

Chap. xiii. Paul's ſpeech to the Jews at Antioch, the ſame as Peter's, chap. ii. to the Jews at Jeruſalem.

Chap. xvii. Paul's method of preaching in the ſynagogues, v. 3. *He reaſoned with them out of the ſcriptures, opening and alledging, That Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead; and that this Jeſus, whom I preach unto you, is the Chriſt.* [The like xviii. 5, 28.]

V. 23. Paul's ſermon to the Athenians, teaches them the true God, the maker of all things, and v. 30, 31. that *He now commandeth all men, every where, to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs*, by that man, *whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.*

Chap. xx. v. 28. Paul exhorteth the elders of Epheſus, *To feed the church* of the Lord, *which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

Chap. xxii. v. 8. Our Lord, ſpeaking from heaven to Paul, calls himſelf Jeſus of Nazareth.

Chap. xxvi. Paul before Agrippa, v. 22, 23. *Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come; that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, and that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead.*

COROLLARIES.

1. THEODORET, in his commentary on Rom. i. 4. remarketh, "That the Lord Chriſt, be- "fore his croſs and ſuffering, was never reputed "to be God, not only not by the Jews, but "even not by his own apoſtles."

I would remark and infer from the above ſummary of the way in which the goſpel was firſt preached and propagated, that even after our Lord's reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven, and ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, his apoſtles ſtill looked upon him and ſpoke of him, invariably, as really and properly a man—but a man endowed with extraordinary divine communications of wiſdom and power—*a man approved of God* for his eminent virtue and holineſs, and voluntary ſufferings for the truth and for the ſalvation of others, ii. 22. x. 38; and, therefore, exalted, as moſt worthy, to the higheſt dominion and honour, ii. 36. v. 31. x. 42.

2. The apoſtles never, in their preaching, dropped any intimations, as though the Lord Jeſus had exiſted in ſome prior ſtate, before his birth in this world; unleſs it is to be underſtood and taken for granted, that all other men alſo have exiſted in ſome antecedent ſtate. For they uniformly ſpeak of him, both to Jews and Gentiles, as of a man, a Jew, of a particular family, the family of David, and of the ſtock of Abraham, ii. 30. xiii. 23. As a prophet, foretold of God, one of their brethren, like unto Moſes and, therefore, a man like him, iii. 22. vii. 37.

3. The apoſtles appear to be entire ſtrangers to that theological figment of two natures in Chriſt, with which a falſe philoſophy has adulterated the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the goſpel; a device which can ſolve every thing, and ſolves nothing: Nor, do they ever betray the leaſt trace of their having believed their great maſter to have been ſome mighty angel, the chief of created ſpirits, by whom, as his deputy, God made the world, and who condeſcended to leave that his glorious ſtation to inform a human body, and ſave mankind. Although others have collected this and more from our Lord's ſayings concerning himſelf, recorded by the ſacred evangeliſts, it appears, from theſe diſcourſes of his apoſtles about him, to both Jews and Gentiles, that they did not ſo underſtand their maſter; but believed him and ſpoke of him, as a man born and living amongſt men, raiſed up by Almighty God for the greateſt purpoſes, which having fulfilled, he was as greatly rewarded.

4. The unbelieving Jews, vi. 14. and other adverſaries ſince their time, have ſcornfully upbraided chriſtians with inliſting themſelves under ſuch a name and leader, as *Jeſus of Nazareth, i. e.* a man of low condition, and in poor circumſtances, and an inhabitant of the obſcure town of Nazareth in Galilee.

But the heavenly meſſenger, Mark xvi. 6. did not ſuppoſe there was any thing degrading in the name. Nor were his apoſtles aſhamed of it, after his aſcenſion into heaven, but the contrary, ii. 22. Nor does our great Lord diſdain

diſdain ſo to call himſelf, in his preſent moſt exalted ſtate at the right hand of God. xxii. 8.

It were earneſtly to be wiſhed, that we his followers, out of a miſtaken, but well-meant intention to do him honour, had not aſcribed to our Saviour Chriſt ſuch a nature and imaginary perfections as his apoſtles, who were beſt acquainted with him, never aſcribed to him, to the danger of defeating, unwittingly, the great end of his dying and riſing again, and of depriving ourſelves, in a great meaſure, of the benefit of his holy and virtuous example and ſufferings. Happy would it have been for themſelves and all others, if chriſtians had honoured the Lord Jeſus more by obeying his commands, and had made this the teſt of love and reverence for him, John xiv. 15. inſtead of attributing to him titles and a character which he never aſſumed, and which add nothing to his real dignity, and making theſe additions and inventions of their own the ſole badge of true believers, to the fatal neglect of that better criterion, which he ſo warmly recommended to his diſciples himſelf, and almoſt with his dying words, John xiii. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.*

PATROBAS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

WITH your leave I ſhall continue my remarks on the reaſoning of St. Paul, without taking notice, at preſent, of what W. W. has replied, in anſwer to thoſe that I have already ſent you. In the mean time, I ſhall think myſelf happy if ſo good a critic, and ſo candid a writer, will contiue his animadverſions. When I have finiſhed my obſervations, I ſhall take notice of all his remarks at once, frankly acknowledging whenever he has convinced me of any miſtake. And as I have not the leaſt doubt, but that he will be as ingenuous on his ſide, I hope that, together, we ſhall be able to ſet ſome very difficult parts of the ſacred writings in a clearer point of light. If the reaſoning of the authors appear to be, in any caſe, haſty and inconcluſive, we ſhall diſcharge chriſtianity of a real incumbrance. On the other hand, if it be only difficult and hard to be underſtood, the inſtances of it may perhaps be, in ſome meaſure, diſentangled; ſo that *truth* and *chriſtianity* cannot fail to be gainers, and nothing will be loſt on the ſide of *candour*.

Not, however, to be always on the objecting ſide, I ſhall endeavour, in my turn, to free the apoſtle's reaſoning from any difficulties with which my own mind has been preſſed, and with reſpect to which I have already received ſatisfaction, either from my own reflections,

or

or by the aſſiſtance of my acquaintance among men of learning; when the caſes are ſuch, that there is room to apprehend that others may poſſibly have ſtumbled at them as much as myſelf.

For ſome time it appeared to me, that St. Paul had, though without deſign, given an injurious repreſentation of the law of Moſes, or rather of the whole Jewiſh diſpenſation of religion, out of his great zeal for the goſpel of Chriſt; aſſerting that it contains no proviſion for the pardon of ſin; as when he ſays, Gal. ii. 21. *If righteouſneſs had been by the law, then is Chriſt dead in vain.* And many other expreſſions might be quoted to the ſame purpoſe. I am convinced, however, that I was under a miſtake with reſpect to this ſubject; and I hope that the following obſervations ſuggeſted by a learned friend, now deceaſed, and which removed my doubts with reſpect to it, will alſo remove thoſe of others, who may have been preſſed with the ſame difficulties as myſelf.

The Jews, in the times of our Saviour and the apoſtles, ſet ſo high a value upon their law (that is, the ceremonial law) that they imagined this alone to be ſufficient for ſalvation, eſpecially if a perſon was free from all groſs immoralities. Nay, they ſeem to have thought, that by ſacrifices, purifications, and other external performances, they could expiate the guilt of the moſt heinous ſins. And thus they ſet aſide all regard to the mercy of God, as the ground of their hopes of pardon and juſtification, ſubſtituting this righteouſneſs of their own in the room

room of it. They ſeem to have thought that ſuch an obedience to the law ſuperſeded the neceſſity of repentance, and that they did hereby, in a ſenſe, make a claim to the divine favour and future rewards.

That this was the prevailing notion among them, appears from the character given in the goſpel, of the phariſees, who were the moſt popular and orthodox ſect. Hence it was, that both John the Baptiſt and our Saviour began their miniſtry with a call to *repentance*, which was, in a manner, a new doctrine to them. And this is agreeable to the whole ſtrain of the apoſtle's reaſoning in his epiſtles to the Romans and Galatians; in which he labours to prove the neceſſity of a regard to the mercy of God, however revealed, for the pardon of ſin, or for juſtification.

Now his argument is, not that there were no declarations of mercy, nor any proviſion made for taking away ſin, under the former diſpenſation (which he is ſo far from denying, that he, again and again, aſſerts it very ſtrongly; ſaying, that Abraham was juſtified before the law, by faith, and mentioning David as celebrating the happineſs of the man whoſe ſins are pardoned). But he aſſerts that the law of Moſes, even including the moral precepts of it, could never juſtify them before God, as they fondly imagined. To prove this, he begins with ſhewing that they, as well as the Gentiles, had groſsly corrupted themſelves; that all were ſinners, in having failed of a complete obedience to their reſpective laws, and were become liable

to

to the penalties of them, and therefore could no otherwiſe be juſtified than by an act of grace, or ſome promiſe of mercy to thoſe who repented of their ſins. He, therefore, infers from hence the neceſſity of removing that dependence, which they were ready to take up on their own righteouſneſs, or the righteouſneſs of the law; (that is, their obedience to it) and caſting themſelves wholly upon the mercy and grace of God, as manifeſted in the goſpel of Chriſt. And to induce them to this, he ſhews that this was no new doctrine, being the very ſame that was preached to Abraham and David, and upon which good men, under the Old Teſtament, founded all their hopes.

It is not true, therefore, that the apoſtle diſparages the law unjuſtly, in order to enhance the merit of the goſpel. He only endeavours to take off the Jews from their extravagant prejudice in favour of the Moſaic law, and their applying it to purpoſes for which it was never deſigned; that is, to juſtify them in the ſight of God, or to ſtand in the place of repentance and the mercy of God.

Neither does he repreſent the Jewiſh religion, in general, as defective, and not providing for the pardon of ſin (as might be ſuppoſed) for he expreſsly ſays, the goſpel, that is, the promiſes of pardon, was preached to them under the law. Thoſe pious Jews, who, at the ſame time that they conformed to the ceremonial law, truſted in the mercy of God, and his promiſes, for pardon, had that very temper, which the apoſtle was labouring to promote in the minds

of

of his converts. And, if they had miſtaken his meaning, as if he had been vilifying the Jewiſh religion, and had, in anſwer to him, urged the promiſes, both in the Moſaic writings and the prophets, of the mercy of God, &c. He would readily have joined iſſue with them, and have ſaid, "I know that very ſufficient "proviſion was made to ſatisfy the mind con- "cerning the mercy of God, and his readineſs "to pardon, by the prophets and even by Mo- "ſes; and, therefore, I ſay, that the doctrine "of the mercy of God, without a perfect obe- "dience, is no new doctrine, but was taught "our fathers. But what I am labouring is to "ſhew theſe judaizing chriſtians the neceſſity "of repentance, and having recourſe to the "fuller diſcovery, which is now made of the "mercy of God by Jeſus Chriſt for the pardon "of ſin; and to convince them of the inſuffi- "ciency of theſe ceremonial performances and "external privileges on which they place ſo "much dependence."

It appears to me, that what he has more immediately in view, both in *Romans* and *Galatians*, is to rectify thoſe falſe notions which the Jews entertained even of their own religion, as if the excellency of it lay in the ceremonial law; while they, in a great meaſure, diſregarded the more ſpiritual part of it, and particularly the repreſentations of the evil nature of ſin, the neceſſity of ſincere repentance, and the need which all ſtand in of the pardoning mercy and grace of God. Theſe were points common to the Old and New Teſtament, and did, indeed, contain the

the eſſence of all true religion; nor could it be ſuppoſed that any religion which came from heaven could fail to teach them. But theſe were things which the generality of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's coming, had but very low notions of. Their religion was a poor, low, ceremonial thing, conſiſting chiefly of external ſervices, while the ſpiritual part of it was, in a great meaſure, neglected and overlooked.

The apoſtle, therefore, at the ſame time that he repreſents it as the great excellence of the goſpel, that it contained ſuch a full diſcovery of the mercy of God, and by the death of Chriſt, made ſuch abundant proviſion for taking away ſin, endeavours to lead them into more juſt and enlarged views of the nature of their own religion; ſhewing them, that in all ages, the ſame doctrine had been preached, and that good men had, under all diſpenſations, the ſame hopes and views.

Though, however, it be true, the promiſes of pardon were publiſhed together with the law of Moſes, yet, they did not properly make a part of the law, much leſs of the ceremonial law, which certainly made no proviſion for moral offences. It is not proper to ſay the king's pardon is the ſentence of the law, or that a perſon, upon pleading it, is juſtified by law. If a perſon who had broken a law is yet forgiven, he cannot be ſaid to be *juſtified by works*; it is ſurely an *act of grace*. — But, after all, this is little more, than a diſpute about a word; for, in one ſenſe, a man may be ſaid to be juſtified *by works*, as without good works or an holy temper he cannot

not be accepted, and on the other hand all muſt allow, that it is *an act of favour* and mercy in God to forgive ſin, even upon repentance. As to the apoſtle James, it is plain, he conſiders faith merely as an aſſent to the goſpel; whereas Paul makes it a practical principle, productive of obedience.

Faith in Chriſt is the principle of obedience and repentance, and, when put alone, ſuppoſes and includes them; but ſtill it is a diſtinct act of the mind. The loweſt ſenſe of it, is the belief of chriſtianity, which was neceſſary as the introduction to the reſt; but it alſo ſignifies, an humble truſt in, and reliance upon the promiſes of pardon and mercy, made in the goſpel, through Chriſt, which are the foundation of the ſinner's hope, and of his return to God.

When the apoſtle ſays, *By the works of the law no fleſh can be juſtified*, he means, either by obſerving the ceremonial law, on which the Jews at that time laid ſo great a ſtreſs, or even the moral law; becauſe he had ſhewn, that mankind in general had broken that law, and conſequently ſtood in need of ſome act of grace, or ſome other proviſion than the law itſelf made; that is, ſome promiſe of pardon, which, whether it was made under the Moſaic diſpenſation or not, was ſtill a diſtinct thing from the law, and was in a great meaſure neglected and overlooked by the Jews at that time. As to faith, as diſtinguiſhed from works, or obedience to the moral law, it meant (as obſerved above) an humble truſt in the mercy of God for pardon, however, that mercy was revealed, whether by

a general

a general promiſe, as to Abraham, and other of the Old Teſtament ſaints, or through a mediator, as under the goſpel. The principle, or temper of mind, was ſtill the ſame, conſiſting, in a deep ſenſe, of the ſinner's guilt and unworthineſs, and of his ſole dependence on divine mercy.

As to the caſe of Abraham—the ſubſtance of the apoſtle's reaſoning is this. Firſt, in oppoſition to the ſtreſs laid upon circumciſion, and an obſervance of the Moſaic law, Abraham is repreſented as juſtified before he was circumciſed, and therefore is the father of the uncircumciſed as well as others. And, ſecondly, his faith in the divine promiſe was accepted of God, inſtead of that complete and perfect obedience in which *he* had failed, as well as others. And though it is true, that his faith was a moral diſpoſition and therefore might be called, in a ſenſe, a good work; yet that, on account of this, his ſins ſhould be forgiven, and his imperfect obedience accepted, was an act of grace and favour, and therefore ſimilar to what the apoſtle was inſiſting upon as the ground of our juſtification before God; which is not our complete obedience, but the mercy of God in the goſpel, to which our faith entitles us. The apoſtle's argument is taken from the particular manner of expreſſion uſed by the hiſtorian, namely, that this act of faith in Abraham, was accounted to him for righteouſneſs.

The quotations from the Pſalms are certainly much to the apoſtle's purpoſe, becauſe they repreſent the bleſſedneſs of thoſe who had ob-

tained the pardon of ſin; which certainly implies, that it was to an act of divine grace and favour they were indebted for it, and not to any works of their own. And though it is true that in the ſame pſalm it is added, that in ſuch perſons there was *no guile*, yet this does not affect the apoſtle's argument; becauſe ſuch expreſſions by no means imply that their obedience was ſo perfect as to ſuperſede the neceſſity of pardon, that is, an act of grace. On the contrary, it is plain, that when it is ſaid, "God "was pleaſed not to impute iniquity to them," it is ſuppoſed he might have done ſo, if he had dealt with them according to the rules of ſtrict juſtice, and, conſequently, that their acceptance was of grace, not of works.

Though I am ſatisfied that the apoſtle's views in what he writes upon this ſubject be juſt, and his reaſoning be generally ſatisfactory, I ſtill cannot help thinking that ſome of his arguments from the Old Teſtament make little or nothing to his purpoſe. If the paſſages he refers to be intended to ſupport a piece of ſtrict reaſoning, it appears to me that he argues inconcluſively; and if they be only quoted by way of accommodation, their original ſenſe is ſo foreign to his application of them, that I think the quotations could have no effect whatever; but that they rather tend to authorize ſuch freedoms with the ſcriptures, as appears to me to be of very dangerous example.

In Rom. x. 3—13. St. Paul introduces Moſes as deſcribing the different properties of the law and of the goſpel, *For they being ignorant of God's*

God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God. For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, That the man that doth theſe things ſhall live by them. But the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh in this wiſe, Say not in thine heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven; that is, to bring Chriſt down from above? Or who ſhall deſcend into the deep, that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead? But, what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou wilt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.

I cannot help thinking that Moſes was ſpeaking concerning any other than his own law in the place referred to; which, for the ſatisfaction of the reader, I ſhall tranſcribe entire, in its proper connection.

Deut. xxx. 10—14. *If thou ſhalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his ſtatutes, which are written in this book of the law; and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul. For the commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the ſea, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay,*

Who ſhall go over the ſea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayeſt do it.

The only circumſtance that ſuggeſted to St. Paul, this application of the paſſage, appears to me to be the mere mention of *aſcending up into heaven*, and *going down into the deep*; but that ſo forced an accommodation of the paſſage can anſwer any good purpoſe in writing, is beyond my comprehenſion.

St. Paul appears to me to have been equally haſty in appealing to the prophet Habakkuk, in favour of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, in oppoſition to works, in the following paſſage, Gal. iii. 11, 12. *That no man is juſtified by works in the ſight of God is evident; for, The juſt ſhall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, The man that doth them ſhall live in them.*

The whole paſſage in the original ſtands connected, as follows.

Hab. ii. 3, 4. *For the viſion is yet for an appointed time; but in the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: becauſe it ſurely will come, it will not tarry. Behold, his ſoul that is lift up is not upright in him; but the juſt ſhall live by his faith.*

But it is evident, that, if the word, in the original, ought to have been tranſlated *faith*, at all, in this place, it muſt mean *faith in the accompliſhment of the divine predictions*, and of this here referred to in particular; and, upon this natural ſuppoſition, the word *live* cannot, with any propriety, be rendered *juſtified*, for the ſenſe of

of the whole clauſe will then be, ſimply, this, that the juſt muſt continue waiting for the accompliſhment of the prophecy; and this very ſenſe the apoſtle gives of this text, when he quotes it, upon another occaſion. Heb. x. 36. —39. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe: For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the juſt ſhall live by faith; but if any man draw back my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.*

But I rather think, that the word in the Hebrew באמונתו ought not to have been rendered *faith* at all; for it properly ſignifies *faithfulneſs, integrity, uprightneſs.* And in this ſenſe, it will better anſwer to the firſt clauſe of the verſe, *His ſoul which is lift up is not upright in him:* And ſtill better if, ſuppoſing a ſmall error to have crept into our Hebrew copies, we admit the reading of the ſeventy, which is authoriſed by St. Paul in other quotations. The whole verſe will then run thus; *If any man draw back my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him; but the juſt ſhall live by his uprightneſs.*

If this be admitted to be the true ſenſe of the prophet Habakkuk, (and both the original Hebrew, and the connection favour this conſtruction) he is ſo far from contradicting the tenor of the law [*The man that doth them ſhall live in them*] that his aſſertion amounts to the ſame thing, only expreſſed in other words.

In the epiſtle to the Hebrews, the apoſtle argues very juſtly againſt the efficacy of the ſacrifices under the law to take away ſin; but I cannot think that, in the following paſſage from the Pſalms, the ſacrifice of Chriſt was, as he ſeems to ſuppoſe, referred to, as more efficacious for that purpoſe; admitting what, I believe, the author really meant, viz. that Chriſt died a ſacrifice in no other than a figurative ſenſe, his death being ſubſervient to the taking away of ſin, or being a neceſſary part of a ſcheme, the great object of which was the reformation of a ſinful world; which is a point of reſemblance abundantly ſufficient to juſtify the application of the term.

Heb. x. 5—10. *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me: In burnt-offering, and ſacrifice for ſin, thou haſt had no pleaſure. Then ſaid I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he ſaid, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offering and offering for ſin, thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure therein (which are offered by the law) then ſaid he, Lo I come, to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond: By which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all.*

That the unprejudiced reader may be the better judge of the ſolidity of this piece of reaſoning, I ſhall tranſcribe the paſſage the apoſtle founds his argument upon entire, exactly as it ſtands in the book of Pſalms,

Pſalm

Pſalm xl. 6—11. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire; mine ears haſt thou opened: Burnt-offering and ſin-offering haſt thou not required. Then ſaid I, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteouſneſs in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt. I have not hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart: I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, let thy loving-kindneſs, and thy truth, continually preſerve me.*

Here is nothing ſaid concerning, *a body prepared for any perſon*; which is the chief circumſtance in the pſalm that makes it look as if it had any reference to Chriſt. This is only an error in the verſion of the ſeventy, which St. Paul copied, and, ſeemingly, reſted his argument upon. Leaving out this clauſe, then, there is nothing in the pſalm, according to the Hebrew, and our tranſlation, that is not quite applicable to David himſelf.

Pſalm li. 11—17. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy ſpirit from me. Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit. Then will I teach tranſgreſſors thy way, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation; and my tongue ſhall ſing aloud of thy righteouſneſs. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe: For thou deſireſt not ſacrifice, elſe would I give it:*

Thou delighteſt not in burnt-offering. The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.

Had St. Paul but had recourſe to this pſalm, in which there is no falſe interpretation in the ſeventy to miſlead him, he could have had no pretence for ſuppoſing, that David ever thought of ſetting up the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt in oppoſition to the ſacrifices which were under the law. The efficacy of the ſacrifices under the law is, indeed, denied by him; and they are oppoſed to others, which are emblematical ſacrifices: but it is not the ſacrifice of the body of Chriſt, but the ſacrifice of a broken ſpirit, and of a broken and a contrite heart; exactly agreeable to the ſentiment and manner of David, throughout the whole book of pſalms, and of all the Old Teſtament prophets; for inſtances of which, conſult Iſaiah i. 11—20. Hoſea vi. 6. Amos v. 21—27. Micah vi. 6—8. It is agreeable likewiſe to the ſentiments of the moſt intelligent Jews in our Saviour's time, approved by himſelf; ſee Marks xii. 33.

As the ſentiments and even the expreſſion of the latter pſalm are ſo much the ſame with thoſe in the former, and the occaſion of them ſeems to have been ſimilar, if not the ſame; is it not reaſonable, to explain the former, which is more obſcure, by the latter, which is plainer and more determinate?

I am perfectly ſatisfied that the apoſtle had the greateſt reaſon to be alarmed at the diſpoſition to *judaize* which the Gentile converts diſcovered; and it is with great propriety that he terms

terms the law, in the ſenſe in which they admired and conformed to it, *beggarly elements, carnal ordinances*, &c. yet I cannot help thinking, that, in ſome caſes, he begins with this proper and juſtifiable uſe of theſe terms, and afterwards ſlides inſenſibly into another that is more obnoxious and hardly juſtifiable. Is not his uſe of the term *fleſh* in the following paſſages an example of this?

To the Galatians, who had begun to apoſtatize to Judaiſm, he ſays, Gal. iii. 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh, having begun in the ſpirit* [the goſpel] *are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?* [the law.] Then comparing the ſeed of Abraham by Hagar to the law, and his ſeed by Sarah to the goſpel, he ſaith, Gal. iv. 29. *But as then, he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now.* Afterwards, keeping to the ſame terms, he goes on, Gal. v. 16—25. *This I ſay then, Walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh. For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; and theſe two are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the ſpirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe; adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they who do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the ſpirit is love, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs,*

goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance; againſt ſuch there is no law. And they who are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts. If we live in the ſpirit, let us alſo walk in the ſpirit.

Another inſtance of the ſame kind, we find in the 8th chapter of Romans, from the 1ſt to the 15th verſe. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk, not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit. For the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God, ſending his own ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh; that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit. For they that are after the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh; but they that are after the ſpirit, the things of the ſpirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be ſpiritually minded is life and peace. For the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God. But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit; if ſo be the ſpirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. And if Chriſt be in you, the body is dead, becauſe of ſin; but the ſpirit is life, becauſe of righteouſneſs. But if the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his ſpirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore brethren we are debtors, not to the fleſh to live after the fleſh: for if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die;*

but

but if ye, through the ſpirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live. For as many as are led by the ſpirit of God, they are the ſons of God. For ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage [the law] *again to fear; but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption* [the goſpel] *whereby we cry Abba, Father.*

The ſame ambiguous terms, *fleſh* and *ſpirit*, occur here, that were made uſe of in the paſſage I quoted from the epiſtle to the Galatians, and the manner of varying and interchanging the ſenſe of them hath the ſame tendency to throw an odium upon the law; with this only difference, that, in this paſſage, the frequent tranſitions from one ſenſe to another are more imperceptible and dubious, which renders the whole more obſcure.

St. Paul himſelf ſeems to have been aware of the objection to his doctrine of faith and grace, as encouraging licentiouſneſs. He anticipates it, and in a formal manner replies to it. His apology we find in the ſixth chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans. The objection is twice put, and the anſwer is, accordingly, twofold. The objection is ſtated as follows, and evidently levelled againſt nothing but the doctrine of juſtification by faith or grace, without works.

Rom. vi. 1. *What ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound? God forbid!* And afterwards, v. 16. *What then? ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid!* This objection is of the utmoſt conſequence, and his introduction to a reply is proportionally ſpirited and ſolemn. Let us now ſee, of what it conſiſts.

"Our

"Our baptiſm," ſaith he, "teacheth us "the contrary." If we aſk, in what manner? he replies, that, "Baptiſm by water, whereby "we are initiated into the chriſtian church, "repreſents, or figures to us the death and "reſurrection of Chriſt. Now, *he died unto ſin*, "and *lives*, or riſes again *unto God.*" We ought, therefore, to die unto ſin, and live unto God. His own words are as follows.

Rom. vi. 2—12. *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him, by baptiſm, unto death; that, like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin: for he that is dead is freed from ſin. Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him. Knowing, that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death ſhall have no more dominion over him. For, in that he died, he died unto ſin once; but, in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewiſe reckon ye yourſelves dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Let not ſin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.*

This, I am apprehenſive, will appear to be but little ſatisfactory to any one that wiſheth

to

to ſee chriſtianity effectually cleared from a charge of licentiouſneſs. At beſt, it is diſappointing his reader, whoſe expectations he had raiſed ſo high by the ſpirited manner in which he reſented the imputation, and begun his anſwer; by putting him off with a mere alluſion, inſtead of a ſolid argument. But even the alluſion ſeems to be faulty. It is both arbitrary, and defective. For, in the firſt place, what natural analogy can there be betwixt baptiſm, and the death or crucifixion of Chriſt. Baptiſm is the inſtituted manner of our taking upon us the chriſtian profeſſion. But this is quite a general idea, and hath no more relation to the death, or crucifixion of Chriſt, than it hath to any part of his life.

But the alluſion is likewiſe very defective: for it depends upon a double ambiguity, one in each of the phraſes [τη αμαρτια] and [τω θεω] which makes the antitheſis, in both its parts, merely verbal. And, accordingly, it entirely diſappears, when we attend to the ideas: For we neither *die unto ſin* nor *live unto God* (admitting the propriety of theſe terms to expreſs a change of life and character) in the ſame ſenſe in which Chriſt died unto ſin, and lived or roſe again unto God. For Chriſt had no ſin of his own to die unto, or to ceaſe from; *He died, only, on account, or in conſequence, of our ſins*; whereas *we*, by dying unto ſin, really *ceaſe to ſin*. Again, by Chriſt's living unto God, is meant *his riſing again by the power of God his Father*; whereas our living unto God muſt be underſtood in a different manner, viz. *our living according to the will of God.*

Remarks

Remarks on the Objections of BARUMENSIS *to the Socinian Hypotheſis*, Vol. II. pag. 445.

BARUMENSIS ſets out with large profeſſions of chriſtian charity and toleration of diſſenting brethren, but ſoon forgets his generous profeſſions. For there is a certain bundle of opinions, upon which, for reaſons known and good, he takes care to beſtow the name Socinian moſt plentifully, and to which he can allow no quarter.

He profeſſes, indeed, in one place, to uſe the phraſe by way of diſtinction only. But it is too apparent, that it is by way of odious diſtinction.

If a writer produces arguments from the holy ſcriptures for what he advances, without borrowing or profeſſing to borrow from others, why ſhould he be liſted under any ſect who may happen to have ſupported the ſame ſentiment, by the like arguments?

And yet, for all the popular cry againſt it; there ſeems nothing to be aſhamed of in the name of Socinian, any more than of Lutheran, Calviniſt, or Zuinglian. High, moſt deſervedly high, as thoſe great reformers ſtand, Luther, Zuinglius and Calvin, in the book of fame, Fauſtus Socinus, will be found to rank as high in the book of life, which is of more conſequence; who, for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel, left his noble family, fortunes, and expectancies, in

in Italy, and lived a ſtranger upon earth, in a ſtrange country, irreproachable in his morals, indefatigable in his labours, for the cauſe of God's revealed truth, and perſecuted to the laſt.

But, ſay you, "he was the author of many pernicious errors and hereſies." So ſays the papiſt alſo, of you and all your proteſtant reformers. All is not error or hereſy, that is called ſuch by an angry adverſary. Socinus was perſuaded, that the word of God was to be interpreted as he interpreted it; and time and impartial inquiry, the diſcoverers of truth, have given a ſanction to his interpretations, more ſolid and weighty than many imagine. Grotius confirms that ſentiment of Socinus, that our Lord had not dwelt in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, with far ſtronger arguments of holy writ, than the other had done; ſince whoſe time it has been daily gaining ground. The late Dr. Lardner, in his "Letter, &c. concerning the Logos, 1759," ſeems to many unanſwerable; and the author of "The true Doctrine of the New Teſtament concerning Jeſus Chriſt in 1767," has ſtill farther illuſtrated the ſubject.

But names of men, and their authority, are nothing. "What ſaith the ſcripture;" that is the chriſtian and the proteſtant rule. Did the Lord Jeſus aſſert his pre-exiſtent ſtate in glory before all ages? Or, did all his words and actions uniformly ſpeak the contrary? How did his apoſtles eſteem of him, whilſt he abode with them upon earth? How did they ſpeak of him, after his aſcenſion into heaven?

But

But from this tribunal of the word of God, Barumenſis, very inconſiſtently with ſome of his own declarations, would appeal, *to the Fathers, Martyrs, and Confeſſors of the church!* pag. 454. and in a very pathetic declamation mourns over our departure from the venerable univerſal ſentiment of all ages concerning the atonement and pre-exiſtence of Chriſt.

If we have the ſcripture for us, it matters little that fathers, &c. are againſt us. And, with the leave of the objector, two or three Italians in the ſeventeenth century had as much right to ſearch the holy ſcriptures upon any point, and communicate their reſearches to the world, as two or three men of any other country, or at any other period.

But the ſentiment concerning the Lord Jeſus not having lived in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, is not a mere novelty of theſe later ages, as Barumenſis would affect to repreſent it. After the apoſtles, it continued to be the belief of that reſpectable body of our Lord's diſciples, the Nazarene chriſtians, *i. e.* Jewiſh believers, for ſeveral ages. Theſe churches of Judea were broken up by the perſecution under the emperor Adrian, and driven into the eaſt, where they ſubſiſted, though much diminiſhed, till near the year of our Lord 400. And they were hardly treated and ſhunned by other churches of chriſtians, for continuing the obſervance of the law of Moſes, although they did not require it of the Gentile chriſtians. This unbrotherly behaviour of other chriſtians to theſe Nazarenes, has been much lamented by ſome of later times, who have been far from

from eſpouſing their ſentiments. It may alſo be obſerved, that the apoſtolic Fathers, favour the no pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, in all their writings, which we can depend upon as genuine and not interpolated.

The doctrine of the pre-exiſtence was firſt brought in by Juſtin Martyr, a heathen philoſopher and convert, who flouriſhed about forty years after the death of the apoſtle St. John; and it was afterwards wrought up more into a ſyſtem and improved, by the Platonic Fathers of the famous Alexandrian ſchool in Egypt, Clement, Origen, &c. &c. But the ancient Nazarene chriſtian faith was ſtill adhered to by many, Sabellius, Noetus, Paul of Samoſata, and their followers; and maintained by Marcellus of Ancyra, and Photinus, about the time of the council of Nice. And the general belief of all other chriſtians, at that time, *i. e.* before the council of Nice, for the firſt three hundred years after Chriſt, was that which was charged upon Arius, and for which he was condemned, namely, that the Son was created before all ages by Almighty God, and was afterwards his inſtrument in the creation of all other things.

It was then, in the fourth century, under Conſtantine, that the preſent orthodoxy concerning the Lord Jeſus, received its form, and became eſtabliſhed by imperial authority; and, [except during the ſhort inter-regnum of the Arian Emperors, who were perſecutors in their turns] from that time to this, during a courſe of one thouſand four hundred years, it has been made

penal in all chriſtian countries, and capital in many of them, to be known to differ from the received orthodoxy in this point of the pre-exiſtence of our Saviour; and in our own country, ſo late as the reign of that bigot James I. Bartholomew Legate, and Edward Wightman, were burnt to death for Arianiſm, as it was then called; though it appears from Fuller's particular account of the opinions of the former, that he was rather what Barumenſis ſtiles a Socinian. But there will be a re-hearing before another judge. Fuller ſays, he was learned, eſpecially in the holy ſcriptures; and what is far more, that he was of life unblameable.

I reckon the grand apoſtacy and corruption of Chriſt's religion, to be the *man of ſin*, or human authority, *ſitting in the temple of God*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3, 4. and dictating in the things concerning Chriſt. In the degree that this ſhall be removed, the purity of his religion, and love and peace amongſt his followers, will be promoted and reſtored.

Profeſſed proteſtants ſhould leave to the papiſts the honour of maintaining that the religion of Chriſt is made doubtful, or in danger of coming to nothing, by the variety of opinions of thoſe who profeſs it. The religion of Chriſt is, *keeping his commandments*. John xiv. 15. *To keep from evil—not to be of the world, as he was not of the world—to be ſanctified through the truth*. John xvii. 15, 16, 17. And, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*; *i. e.* thine apoſtle, thy meſſenger; veſted with authority from thee.

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The new motives to an holy obedience for chriſtians, are the love of God manifeſted by his only begotten ſon, and the promiſe of everlaſting life by him. John iii. 16. and alſo *the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge—who hath waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood,—hath laid down his life for us.* Eph. iii. 19. Rev. i. 5. 1 John iii. 16.

Theſe things are plain; every thing neceſſary for faith and practice in the ſcriptures; are intelligible to the meaneſt capacity; the *wayfaring man cannot err therein*, nor be under the leaſt uncertainty what he *muſt do* to be ſaved, to obtain eternal life, unleſs he put himſelf into the hands of a guide, who will put into his creed the doctrines of *atonement, vicarious ſacrifice, pre-exiſtence, &c. &c.* articles theſe which very happily were left out of the apoſtles creed, and which certainly cannot be neceſſary to ſalvation, unleſs for thoſe who find them in the holy ſcriptures themſelves, but which can give them no right to impoſe them upon others.

SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

The deſign of your Theological Repoſitory is admirable, and cannot fail of being uſeful. As you have invited and encouraged the more timorous part of mankind to propoſe their doubts, and to communicate ſuch hints as may be improved upon by better hands, I take this advantage, in full aſſurance that ſome friend to ſcripture knowledge will help me to underſtand the following paſſages. All perſons muſt be very ſenſible how much has been built upon them, and how very differently they have been explained.

THEOPHILUS.

THE true meaning of the whole firſt chapter to the Hebrews, depends very much upon the light in which we conſider the laſt part of the ſecond verſe, *by whom alſo he made the worlds.* I agree with thoſe who would tranſlate the word αιωνας, by ages, or periods of time; for beſides that the *ſundry parts, and divers manners*, ver. 1. ſeem to require this, it is not very clear, at leaſt, that ever the Greek word is uſed in the New Teſtament to ſignify the viſible or material world. But ſtill, it is difficult to conceive how theſe ſeveral ages were made by the Son of God, who only ſpake to the Jews under the laſt of them. The learned Grotius would read δι ον, that is, *for whom, &c.* inſtead of δι ου, as it is at preſent;

preſent; and, in this way, the coherence would be obvious and beautiful; but it does not appear that there are any ancient MSS. or verſions to juſtify ſuch an alteration of the original; and whilſt we retain the prepoſition governing the genitive, I very much queſtion whether the words will tranſlate, as above, *for*, or *becauſe of whom*, &c. No examples of this have occurred to me, and I believe that Grotius himſelf has not mentioned any. If you or any of your correſpondents can ſupply that defect, to make out a very natural meaning of the whole, it would be a good ſervice to the public. In the mean time, till this happen, I would adventure upon an enlargement of idea to the word εποιησεν (made) as if the apoſtle intended by it, the making out, finiſhing, or perfecting of the ages, ſo as to determine the proper uſe or value of all that had gone before. They were, till then, even the beſt of them, incomplete; but by the Son, the great Meſſiah, the ſeveral periods or diſpenſations were ſo united, as to become one great and beautiful whole. As ſeen before his appearing, they were not eaſily, if at all, to be underſtood; whereas this laſt and beſt diſpenſation threw diſtinct light upon each of them, ſo that the ages taken together were then made. Moſt of the Greek Lexicons, under the work ποιεω, mention different ſenſes of it, that come ſo near to what I would affix to it, in the preſent caſe, that it does not appear to me at all an unnatural ſtretch; and yet I could have wiſhed to produce a ſingle direct inſtance. But this may poſſibly occur to ſome of your readers; and it would be kind in

them to publiſh any ſuch thing in one of your numbers. Mr. Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, obſerves, that the verb comes from ποιος, *(qualis)* and ſeems to intimate, that which gives ſuch properties or qualities to any thing, as to form or make it out. Some may think that the uſe of the word αιωνας, Heb. xi. 3. deſtroys the very foundation upon which all the above it built; and, I acknowledge, that, for a long while, it appeared to me an unſurmountable difficulty; nor was I relieved much by what the learned Dr. Sykes has writ upon that paſſage. His reaſonings are ſpecious, but not clearly concluſive: they helped me, however, to this thought, which I likewiſe preſume to lay before you; that the apoſtle's intention there, to ſignify, *that through faith we underſtand that the ages were framed* (fitted up, completed) *by the word*, or appointment, *of God*; *ſo that things which are ſeen* by us, in the hiſtory of former times, particularly that of the elders, ver. 2. who by this principle of faith obtained a good report, *were not brought about by things which do appear*, things which ſtrike upon the ſenſes of mankind; oppoſed to things hoped for, things not ſeen, ver. 1. in confirmation whereof, the following examples from ver. 4. are adduced. If this view of the text be admitted, which does no violence to the original, it makes an eaſy and agreeable connection. The principle of faith as deſcribed by the apoſtle, and without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, in the manner that the elders of the Jewiſh nation did, is well illuſtrated, from its wonderful effects. But if, by the worlds, we under-

underſtand the heavens and the earth material, with their connections, we are left at a great loſs to ſee the meaning and propriety of ver. 3. altogether. I muſt repeat, that it is with great diffidence I propoſe theſe hints; but as I have no aim in ſtudying the New Teſtament, except to aſcertain the preciſe, original meaning of it, for my own benefit and that of others; I could not be eaſy till I embraced this providential help, by means of your Repoſitory, either to be ſet right if I am wrong, or to be confirmed in my opinions if they are right. You may poſſibly receive ſome other hints from the ſame hand, who, by his office, is obliged to lecture frequently upon a large portion of ſcripture; and who, for want of ſuch aſſiſtance as you have lately provided us with, hath, after all the attention he could give to the beſt expoſitors, been obliged to venture, in ſome inſtances, upon interpretations different from theirs.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS is not ſatisfied with my anſwer to his "queries concerning St. Paul's argu-"ment, Rom. v. 12—14." He cannot help concluding, "that the death with which Adam "was threatened, in caſe of his eating the for-"bidden fruit, was *mortality*, and not the actual "immediate inflicting of death, becauſe he "thinks that the puniſhment, according to its "real import, muſt have taken place when the "threatening was ſo expreſs."

I cannot ſee the neceſſity of this, nor could I ever thoroughly ſatisfy myſelf with this interpretation of that threatening, *in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt die.* All ſanctions of laws muſt be *ſo expreſs*, or they ſtand for nothing, and yet the ſupreme lawgiver has an unqueſtionable right and authority to remit, mitigate, or commute the puniſhment threatened, and this ſeems to me to have been plainly the caſe here. Gen. iii. 17—19. *And unto Adam he ſaid, Becauſe thou haſt hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it, curſed is the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee, and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field. In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return* (of courſe) *unto the ground, for out of it waſt thou taken; for duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.*

In conſequence of this ſentence he is turned out of paradiſe, and excluded from the tree of life, for this purpoſe expreſsly, *leſt he ſhould eat of the tree of life and live for ever*; which muſt, of courſe, expoſe his offspring to their natural mortality; and if he had ſuffered immediate death, his poſterity muſt have been cut off with him. But under this milder ſentence (not without hope even of farther favour) he is ſuffered to live as long as his natural robuſt conſtitution would hold out, and the common fruits of the earth would ſupport it, even 930 years; a little eternity compared with what the common period of human life has ſince been reduced to.

This

This firſt threatening was a ſufficient intimation to mankind, that any diſobedience to their Maker deſerved immediate death, whether it was always exacted or not.

"But ſhould all this be allowed," Paulinus thinks, "it will not at all help St. Paul's reaſoning."

I cannot ſee what need St. Paul's reaſoning ſtands in of any help at all. His plain deſign is to ſhew, that all mankind die, or are liable to die, through Adam's tranſgreſſion alone; and that they ſhall all be raiſed to life again through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone. The death of the whole human race, is a part of the puniſhment of their father Adam, for his ſin; as a reſurrection of them to life, is a part of the reward of Chriſt for his obedience. *As by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men for that* (εφ ω, with reſpect to which, viz. death) *all have ſinned, i. e.* are involved in this conſequence of that one ſin of Adam (and nothing is more common in the courſe of God's providence, than for children to ſuffer for their parents fault.) This is plainly what the apoſtle is arguing. *For*, ſays he, *until the law*, or before the law (the law of Moſes, and, if you will, the law of Noah too,) *ſin was in the world*, ſin againſt the whole moral law. But ſin is not imputed or capital where there is no law that makes it ſo; the ſinner without ſuch a law, though guilty of a wrong action, is not *guilty of death* (as the ſcriptures ſpeak) nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them who had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion,

ſion, againſt a law threatening death, therefore all men who are not under, and therefore cannot ſin againſt ſuch a law, and yet die, die for, or in conſequence of Adam's ſin, not their own. *Through the offence of one, many be dead*, v. 15. *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo, by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life*, v. 18.

There was, indeed, a law given to Noah which made murder capital; but the Jews, after Moſes' time, had at leaſt ten ſuch laws; *therefore*, ſays the apoſtle, *the law, i. e.* the law of Moſes, *entered that the offence might abound, but where ſin, i. e.* ſin incurring death, *abounded, grace did much more abound*, viz. in reſtoring ſuch to life through Jeſus Chriſt.

Paulinus obſerves, that "if the breach of a "law, the penalty of which was the actual im-"mediate infliction of death, was ſinning after "the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, very "few under the law of Moſes did ſo ſin." Adam was threatened, indeed, *in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die*; but neither the law of Noah nor that of Moſes required ſuch an immediate execution of the criminal. Death being the legal penalty of ſuch and ſuch crimes, was ſufficient to denominate them after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion (it is not neceſſary ſimilitudes ſhould run upon all four) and yet there were ſo far from very few who thus ſinned under the law of Moſes, as Paulinus aſſerts, that perhaps there was not one individual perſon (very infants and our Saviour excepted) who had not ſo ſinned, eſpecially conſidering one of thoſe laws

laws (as St. Paul obſerved) extended to the very inward deſires of the heart, and this, notwithſtanding the young man's delaration to our Saviour, *all theſe have I kept from my youth up*, and St. Paul's expreſſion, *as touching the law, blameleſs*, and *he that offends in one point is guilty of all*, is as liable to ſuffer the penalty as if he had broken all ſuch commandments; therefore the Jews had little reaſon to expect to be ſaved, or delivered from death, and inherit eternal life by the works of the laws, as St. Paul argues elſewhere.

This is the light in which I conſider this reaſoning of St. Paul. I am, Gentlemen,

Your's and Paulinus's humble ſervant,

W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,*

IF the following ſentiments and reflections are worthy of a place in your literary collection, I make no doubt they will be inſerted; but if they deſerve not to mix with ſuch good company, I would yet beg the ſubject may be kept in view, and undertaken by ſome maſterly pen, as, I know, it is to many highly intereſting.

Prudence has frequently been ſtigmatized as a ſhabby virtue. Something, that wiſhes to wear its appearance, has often, indeed, been found

* The ſubject of this paper, though not exactly within the plan of this work, has ſo near a relation to it, that we ſhall be glad to have it diſcuſſed by our correſpondents.

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in the company of ſhabby paſſions. Its name has been taken in vain, and its garb put on to hide, or to ſet off mean and intereſted views. But when clear of ſuch diſgracing connections, and dwelling in an honeſt mind, it will always be found worthy of that cardinal rank, which it has ſo long poſſeſſed on the honourable ſcale. It will ever be found eſſential to ſucceſs in the paſtoral office. No degree of genius, knowledge, or literature, as human nature appears among us, can compenſate for its want. To what degree this virtue is to be admitted in the following caſe, which is the caſe of many chriſtian miniſters, perhaps it will be difficult to determine.

Suppoſe a paſtor, fully perſuaded that various tenets, bearing the name of chriſtian, are not ſuch in truth, but the offspring of very different parents; and that the congregation, to which he miniſters, not only believes them true and chriſtian, but alſo that they are ſome of the eſſentials of Chriſt's religion; without which the goſpel would loſe much of its beauty and excellence. What is he to do to maintain a good conſcience, and not loſe his uſefulneſs? An anſwer to this queſtion, ſo plain as to leave no doubt, would be eſteemed by many, as a preſent of great value.

Men of open and generous principles, who can hardly conceive the various prejudices and ſhackles which jaundice and blind the groſs of the ſpecies, will be ready to ſay,—"Lay open "the whole counſel of God. Speak the truth "in God and lie not. Great is truth, and it

"will

"will prevail. Conſequences are not in our "power; leave them to God. Preach ye boldly "the whole truths of Chriſt, whether men will "hear or forbear. You will thus approve your-"ſelf a faithful ſervant of Chriſt; and, what-"ever men do, your reward will be on high." This looks well in theory. It ſeems dangerous to bring it into queſtion; and probably ſome will think it cannot be queſtioned, but by men of low and ſordid views. Were all profeſſing chriſtians poſſeſſed of that candour and openneſs to truth, which is ſo deſirable and agreeable to the goſpel, this ſentence would be without appeal. But, alas! how few paſtors are bleſſed with ſuch audiences? How very different are the bulk among the various denominations of chriſtians?

Now, let us conſult experience, which cannot be overthrown by any theory. Experience, I judge, will declare againſt theſe maxims, and ſhew, that they have ſeldom, if ever, been ſucceſsful in common congregations. I have now in my eye ſeveral inſtances, in which men of very conſiderable abilities have, in a great degree, loſt both their comfort and uſefulneſs in their miniſtry, by adhering to this plan, and, I preſume, every man, tolerably acquainted with the ſtate of things, in this reſpect, muſt be able to point out ſeveral more. Though once or twice in a century, a *Foſter* may ariſe, and meeting with perſons of a liberal turn, may have weight enough of artillery, openly and boldly to beat down the fortreſſes of error and ſuperſtition, yet this is not to be weighed againſt general experience.

"Is,

"Is, then, it may be ſaid, a miniſter at li-
"berty, in order to preſerve his people's good
"opinion, to preach as true what he believes
"falſe? As Chriſt's goſpel what he believes the
"ſpawn of error, ſuperſtition or prieſtcraft? If
"he knows he ſpeaks falſely, even though he
"thinks he is ſpeaking for the cauſe of God,
"will God approve? May he thus, at leaſt,
"*ſpeak evil*, that good may come?" God for-
bid! all theſe are far from my deſign. What
then is he to do? *Hic labor hoc opus.*

Here, I preſume, there is room for prudence to make her appearance. Here is a wide and noble theatre, on which ſhe may diſplay her ſalutary powers. But let her ſtand by a little; "for a greater than prudence is here;" Jeſus, the Lord of chriſtians, ſaid to his diſciples, John xvi. 12. what ſeems nearly or directly to the point in hand. "I have yet many things to ſay to you, but you cannot bear them now." I will not attempt to ſhew a critical acumen, in diſſecting this text, but take the ſenſe as it appears plainly upon its face.

Aboliſhing the law of ceremonies, calling the Gentiles, &c. were probably here in view. But, in the preſent caſe, it is of little moment, what the particulars were. Whatever they were, Jeſus ſaw that to preach them *then* would do no good, but hurt; and that it was proper they ſhould lie dormant, until the diſciples were farther enlightened. Prudence, then, will ſometimes require that ſome truths, even in preaching the goſpel, be not expoſed to view. But this is not the only inſtance, in which the Saviour acted in

this

this manner; for we read, Mark iv. 33. "And "with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word "unto them *as they were able to bear it.*" Jeſus, then, did not think, becauſe things were true, that he was thereby authorized to preach them to every one, and at all times. He liſtened to the innocent counſels of prudence. He had regard to men's weakneſſes and prejudices. He knew what would give offence and be loſt, and what would have a good effect; and, by theſe, he regulated his public preaching. Is not this a rule, a precedent for the miniſters of religion, as far as their knowledge of the ſtate of their people, and their prudence, can direct their conduct?

"Chriſt only delayed their information," it will be ſaid, "till after the deſcent of the Holy "Ghoſt, when they would be both more able "and willing to admit every divine truth." Be it ſo. But from this it appears, that there are times and circumſtances, when it is not proper to declare every truth—That miniſters are to have in view the weakneſs and prejudices of their people; and not inflame their angry paſſions, by too blunt declarations of what they cannot bear; and alſo, that they are fulfilling their office, in exhibiting light, in proportion to the ſtrength of their eyes; and giving them ſuch food, as their ſtomachs can digeſt. In ſhort, that they are to conſult the people's education only, and withhold whatever may obſtruct that good purpoſe. This is done, in a thouſand inſtances, in common life; where men's prejudices are to be combated we preſent things as they

they can bear them, and not at once, attack with keenneſs, for that would fruſtrate the deſign. It would be diſreſpectful to our people, to introduce, in this caſe, *caſting pearls before ſwine*, nor could it, with propriety, be applied. But it is very proper to liſten to the opinion of the apoſtle of the Gentiles, *who truly was not a whit behind the chiefeſt apoſtle*, in 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. There he expreſſes himſelf in the cleareſt and fulleſt manner, in favour of the prudential ſcheme. Some, I believe, have ſtumbled at theſe verſes; and ſuppoſed that St. Paul did not act in that manner, but that his enemies imputed to him that artful ſcheme. But no mark of this is ſeen; and, at that rate, the meaning of a great part of theſe holy writings would be ſo vague, that we ſhould ſeldom be able, with any degree of certainty, to diſtinguiſh what we ſhould admit, and what refuſe. The good apoſtle is only copying his maſter; and with ſuch a weight of evidence on that ſide, we need not, I think, heſitate to range him under the ſtandard of prudence.

It will, perhaps, be ſaid, "By this rule, even "the prieſts of Rome may be vindicated; and "no reformation is ever to be expected." Far, very far be this from my deſign! Yet had I renewed opportunities of preaching to a ſociety of papiſts, and were bent on their reformation, though I would never ſay, I believed tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, &c. nor even hint, that they might poſſibly be true; yet I would not ſhock their prejudices, at once, but rather keep the diſputed things out of ſight, till the foundations

dations were well laid; till I had gained ſome ſhare in their confidence; and, with more advantage, could ſap the foundations of error, and open truth to their view.

Yet, by no means, would I leave error to reign uncontrouled; but believe it my duty to root it up to the utmoſt of my power, and to plant truth wherever there is a promiſing ſoil. To this end, from the experience and obſervation of a conſiderable number of years, in a narrow ſphere indeed, I am inclined to adopt and purſue the following maxims, as conſonant both to prudence and the New Teſtament, and bidding faireſt for ſucceſs.

By a diligent and affectionate aſſiduity, in the various branches of the paſtoral office, to endeavour to conciliate a ſhare both of the people's eſteem and love; in public preaching and private converſation, always to fix the religion of Jeſus Chriſt upon a broad baſis, and continually refer the people to the ſcriptures, for underſtanding the ſcheme of redemption.

Often to inſiſt, that human authority, of whatever kind, is to have no weight in eſtabliſhing ſcripture doctrines; but every thing is to be taken from and founded on theſe ſacred books only. Never profeſſedly to canvaſs the points in diſpute, but when they come in the way, always to uſe ſcripture language only: Thus leaving them to ſleep, as may be hoped, the ſleep of death. There are abundance, ſurely, of flowers and fruits in the garden of God, both for public and private uſe, without meddling with theſe dangerous trees of diſputed know-

ledge. To avoid, as much as may be, entering into diſputes with perſons of unopened minds, but to uſe every mean to make them candid: And wherever the ſmalleſt opening appears, to turn it to advantage. To catechiſe children and youth, not once or twice only, but many times, every year; laying in them the ſolid foundations of chriſtianity; and ſeduloufly preparing their minds, to receive every divine truth, in the love thereof, wherever it may be found.

Thus opinions, falſely ſtiled orthodox, will drop into the grave, with the elder ſet, and truth will ſpring up with the younger. Thus our ſucceſſors in the miniſtry of Chriſt will find a more favourable ſoil, on which to ſow and cultivate the ſeeds of genuine chriſtianity. Where we leave the good cauſe, let them take it up, and in what they fall ſhort, let their ſucceſſors, in their turn, attempt to perfect. Thus, in time, truth may obtain its full ſway; and all the truths of revelation find free admiſſion into the minds of the meaneſt profeſſors of the name of Jeſus.

"On this ſcheme, many may and muſt die, "without conviction of error." Allowed. But theſe errors, with an honeſt mind, will not endanger their ſalvation. Beſides, how can this poſſibly be remedied? If my views of this very important ſubject are unjuſt, it will give me peculiar pleaſure to have them rectified and enlarged. To enter the liſts of diſpute is foreign to my deſire; being ſenſible I cannot put in a juſt claim to any other name or character than that of

DISCIPULUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

IN anſwer to the queries of your correſpondent G. H. concerning that clauſe of our Lord's interceſſory prayer, John xvii. 9. *I pray for them*; *I pray not for the world*; give me leave to obſerve,

1. That the tranſactions with his diſciples at the laſt ſupper, recorded chapter thirteenth, ſeem intended by him to impreſs deep on their minds a ſenſe of their peculiar relation to himſelf, together with its proper conſequences. The whole ſucceeding converſation with them, in chapter fourteenth, fifteenth, and ſixteenth, turns upon ſentiments, duties, and promiſes, proper to them as believers in, and belonging to him, in contradiſtinction from the unbelieving world, and that diſtinction is frequently recurred to, and kept in view through that converſation; particularly, in the ſixteenth chapter he prepares them for the ſhock they would ſuffer by his departure from them, and the ſevere trial of their ſteadfaſtneſs in adhering to him, which they ſhould undergo from the perſecutions of the unbelieving world. It ſeems then very proper, that he ſhould conclude ſuch a converſation, in the manner he does, with a prayer to God, with them and for them, peculiarly adapted to their caſe. Every ſentiment and petition of this prayer appears admirably calculated to impreſs the ſubjects he had been diſcourſing of, indelibly on their minds,

and to keep them ſteady in their profeſſion of his name, and the practice of the duties reſulting from their relation to him. Nor, though we find in it ſuch a clauſe as this in queſtion, can we at all reaſonably infer from it any thing inconſiſtent with the moſt *univerſal benevolence*; unleſs the offering up a ſpecial interceſſion, appropriated to a ſpecial caſe and particular perſons, may be ſo underſtood. It imports only, that the prayer he was *then* offering was meant for his diſciples, and not for the world; but this ſeems rather to intimate, that his ordinary practice in prayer was to intercede, according to the dictates of the moſt *univerſal benevolence*, for the whole world.

2. I would obſerve alſo, that no part of this prayer can, with any propriety, be applied to the *world*, or the unbelieving part of mankind, except conſequentially, as will be noticed under the following head. The *declarations* are not true, if ſo applied; and the *petitions* are for bleſſings which the unbelieving world is not capable of enjoying, while it remains in that ſtate. I need not enter on a detail of particulars, as they will appear very obvious on peruſal. However,

3. It ought to be remarked, that, even in this ſpecial and appropriated interceſſion, Jeſus agreeably to his habitual and governing principle of *univerſal benevolence*, was not unmindful of the beſt intereſts of the *whole world* of mankind, which he came to promote by the univerſal propagation and ſalutary efficacy of his goſpel; for inſtance, ver. 18. *As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I ſent them into the world, i. e.*

to

to ſpread among mankind in general *thy word of truth*, ver. 17. and thereby to bring many to the belief, profeſſion, and obedience of it; in which caſe, they alſo will become proper and capable objects of all the bleſſings I have now requeſted for theſe my preſent diſciples; therefore, ver. 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word.* Ver. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us*; the natural and happy effect of which may be, *that the world*, ſtill more extenſively and generally, *may believe that thou haſt ſent me*, and thereby obtain, at length, all the bleſſings I requeſt for my diſciples.

Theſe clauſes, thus taken together, ſeem to me to exhibit a ſentiment, or rather an implied petition, very ſimilar to that which G. H. propoſes, as "more agreeable to our Saviour's ge-"neral character and conduct, and the bene-"volence which he himſelf inculcates:" and I will venture to refer it to himſelf, whether theſe clauſes, taken in the connection they manifeſtly bear to the whole prayer, do not expreſs the ſentiments of univerſal good-will to mankind more ſtrongly and comprehenſively, than what he hath propoſed; and though, perhaps, they do not ſtand where he looked for them, they ſtand, I think, much more properly, viz. after the mention our Lord makes of ſending his diſciples into the world. I am, Gentlemen,

His and your very humble ſervant,

EUSEBIUS.

GAL. iii. 20.

Ο δε μεσιτης ενος ουκ εστιν, ο δε θεος εις εστιν.

THIS verſe has exerciſed the pens of the critics; and, as far as my acquaintance with them reaches, they ſeem not to give a true interpretation of it. Mr. Locke's criticiſm on the place, I believe, has met with univerſal approbation; but I cannot acquieſce with it, as I apprehend the Greek will not bear it; neither is there any thing in the context that favours it. He underſtands the apoſtle as diſcourſing of two perſons covenanting and agreeing together. God ſtanding on one ſide, and the children of Iſrael and the Gentiles on the other. For, in his note on the place, he ſays, "But "Moſes, at the giving the law, was a mediator "between the Iſraelites and God, the Gentiles "not being preſent," &c. This, I apprehend, he was obliged to ſuppoſe, in order to account for ενος. And if we take it in this ſenſe, the expreſſion will be very harſh and uncouth. But a mediator is not of one party, viz. the Gentiles, but God is one party. This, in plain Engliſh, is what Mr. Locke ſays; and his paraphraſe is not one jot better. "Becauſe a mediator is a mediator between two parties concerned, "but God is but one of theſe concerned in the "promiſe." I own myſelf incapable of comprehending his meaning, and ſhould be glad to receive any information.

In order to throw ſome light on this difficult paſſage, it may, perhaps, be only neceſſary carefully

carefully to conſider ſome preceding verſes, which I ſhall attempt to paraphraſe. The rude and unpoliſhed manner in which I do it, I hope you will excuſe. And I need go no farther back than to the fifteenth verſe, " Brethren, I " ſpeak after the manner of man. No man " taketh from or addeth any thing to a covenant " between man and man, if it be once ratified, " eſtabliſhed, and confirmed. Now the pro- " miſes or covenants were made, ratified, eſta- " bliſhed and confirmed to Abraham and to his " *ſeed*. Obſerve well, he does not ſay, and to his " *ſeeds*, as of many, but only as concerning *one*. " And to *thy ſeed*, which ſeed is *Chriſt*. But " this I ſay, the covenant thus made, ratified, " eſtabliſhed and confirmed in Chriſt by God, " could not by the law, *i. e.* the law of Moſes, " which was not given till four hundred and " thirty years after, be annulled, or revoked, " ſo as to ſet aſide, or make void, the promiſe; " for if this right of *inheritance* had been by " the law, then it would not have been by pro- " miſe; but God gave to Abraham this right " of *inheritance* by promiſe."

To what intent or purpoſe, therefore, may one object, was the law of Moſes given? I anſwer; The law was given, or added, upon account of tranſgreſſions, until the ſeed, to whom the promiſe was made, ſhould come. This law being ordained, appointed, and ſet in order by the angels in the hand of a mediator, viz. Aaron and his ſons, who were to ſucceed him in the office of an high prieſt; and who were to be conſidered as mediators between God and the people. This mediator, therefore,

could not be conſidered as of *one*, but as of *many*, ſucceeding each other. but θεος η χριστος, is one mediator; or, as it is expreſſed in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, *Chriſt is come, an high prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedec*, or peace-maker.

I can go no farther. But might I be ſuffered to offer a bare conjecture, and I pretend to no more, having not ſeen, and perhaps never ſhall ſee, a manuſcript; and that is, as all the Greek manuſcripts are wrote in capitals and abbreviations, as I am informed, θεος might eaſily be miſtaken for χριστος.

J. F.

ADVERTISEMENT.

OUR correſpondent OXONIENSIS has ſent us ſome very ſenſible obſervations on the duration of future puniſhment, and in favour of the doctrine of *univerſal reſtitution*. But his arguments are chiefly levelled againſt the doctrine of the *eternity of hell torments*, and are ſuch as have frequently been urged before. If this gentleman, or any other of our correſpondents, will take a little pains with a compariſon of the hypotheſis of univerſal reſtitution, with that of the *annihilation of the wicked*, we ſhall think ourſelves obliged to him.

CANTABRIGIENSIS argues againſt *infant baptiſm*, as not once mentioned, or ſo much as intimated in the New Teſtament, and makes ſome juſt, but not new remarks upon ſeveral texts which have been thought to favour the practice. Upon the whole, he is of opinion that infant baptiſm was introduced into chriſtianity to increaſe the power and opulence of the prieſts. We ſhall be obliged to any of our correſpondents, who will give us any new light upon this ſubject.

THE

Theological Repoſitory.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

As you have lately inſerted in your uſeful work, ſeveral things relating to the perſon of our Saviour, you are deſired to ſubmit to the judgment of your candid readers, the following remarks on ſome texts of ſcripture, which reſpect that ſubject.

I am your's, &c.

BEREANUS.

ONE of the moſt diſtinguiſhed paſſages relating to this point is in Phil. ii. 6, &c. Moſt learned men, I ſuppoſe, are ſenſible, that our tranſlation of ſome of the expreſſions, which St. Paul hath uſed, is far from being juſt. I ſhall, therefore, give the following literal verſion.

Ver. 6. "Who being in the form of God, "did not look upon likeneſs to God as a thing "to be coveted. 7. But emptied himſelf, and "took the form of a ſervant (or ſlave) when "made in the likeneſs of men. 8. And, being "found in condition as a man, he humbled "himſelf, becoming obedient even to death, "the death of the croſs. Wherefore, God," &c.

This

This repreſentation of our Lord hath been ſuppoſed to countenance three different ſchemes, each of which it is not improper briefly to conſider, in order to chuſe that which hath the greateſt appearance of truth.

1. Some have inſiſted upon this paſſage, as a proof that our Saviour is the Supreme Being, or one equal to him. *Who being in the form of God, &c.* that is, ſay they, who being the infinite and eternal God, poſſeſſed of the very ſame degree of perfection and excellence with his heavenly Father, and who, therefore, juſtly claimed equality with him.

This interpretation, is, in my opinion, liable to ſeveral inſuperable objections. It ſubverts the very foundation of true religion, viz. the unity of God; and contradicteth the plain declarations of holy ſcripture, recorded in the following places, John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.

Farther; *The form of God*, which our Lord was in, he diveſted himſelf of, εαυτον εκενωσε, literally, he *emptied himſelf*, and aſſumed the form of a ſlave, was crucified, and afterwards exalted. But nothing of this nature, can be affirmed of the bleſſed God. His ſtate and character are immutable. This he hath ſolemnly declared in his word, and reaſon itſelf aſſures us, that he can neither be abaſed nor exalted, that he is infinitely removed from the poſſibility of ſuffering pain or death, being the ſource of life, perfection, and happineſs.

The phraſe in our tranſlation, *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, it muſt be acknowledged,

knowledged, favours this ſcheme. But the original will admit of, and the connection requires a different verſion. This hath been clearly ſhewn by a learned writer, in a critical inquiry into the meaning of this paſſage, lately publiſhed in the Repoſitory, to which I refer.

2. Another ſcheme, which St. Paul hath been thought to advance in this place, repreſents our Saviour as enjoying dignity and glory in the celeſtial world, and as diveſting himſelf of them, aſſuming a human body, and in conſequence of this abaſement, ſubmitting to ſuffering and death. A ſhort paraphraſe of the apoſtle's words may the better enable us to judge of this ſcheme.

Who being in the form of God, did not look upon likeneſs to God as a thing to be coveted; but emptied himſelf, and took the form of a ſervant, when made in the likeneſs of men, and being found in condition as a man, he humbled himſelf, becoming obedient even to death, the death of the croſs.

Who being in a godlike condition, in the heavenly world, was not deſirous to continue in ſuch a godlike ſtate; but diveſted himſelf of his glory, aſſumed humanity in a very mean and low condition, and being thus brought into the ſtate of a man, he humbled himſelf yet more, by ſubmitting even to death, the (painful and ignominious) death of crucifixion.

This illuſtration ſeems quite natural. It offers not the leaſt violence to any one of the expreſſions, which the apoſtle hath uſed, but gives to each its plain and literal meaning. I

ſhall

ſhall not, however, inſiſt upon this at preſent, but proceed to conſider the third ſcheme, which ſome learned men have ſuppoſed him to teach in this place. "Theſe gentlemen imagine, "that *the form of God* refers only to our Sa- "viour's appearing, and manner of acting in "this world, and not to any being or exiſtence, "that he hath been thought to have had be- "fore his conception, and birth of the virgin. "It means no more, than that the man Jeſus "bore a great and godlike character, or was "inveſted with powers more than human, and "that he acted like a god, in exerting his "miraculous gifts. Agreeably to this, the "following expreſſions, *he did not think likeneſs* "*to God, &c.* but *emptied himſelf, &c.* are ſaid to "mean, that he was not ambitious, of exhibiting "the honour and power which God had given "him; that he made no oſtentation of the power "that attended him in working miracles, but, on "the contrary, willingly made void, or emp- "tied himſelf of his glory, by ſubmitting to "ill uſage, which ſlaves, and even the vileſt of "the ſons of men have been wont to undergo."

What is here aſſerted of the humility of our Lord, in the exerciſe of miraculous powers, no chriſtian will diſpute. This, however, appears to me, not to have been the thing deſigned by St. Paul. He ſpeaks of our Lord's being in the form of God, before he was in the mean condition of a man. *Who being in the form of God, emptied himſelf*, and took *the form* of a *ſlave, when made*, or *being made in the likeneſs of men*. Whereas the ſcheme juſt mentioned inverts this order. For if it be true, Jeſus was a man, and

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in a low condition, a conſiderable number of years before he was in the form of God, He was deſcended from poor parents, and, in all probability, ſubmitted to the drudgery of a mean occupation from the time he was capable of it, until the commencement of his miniſtry.

Farther; By *the form of God*, St. Paul appears not to have intended a power of working miracles, becauſe he repreſents our Saviour as diveſting himſelf of it. He doth not, indeed, expreſsly affirm what it was that he emptied himſelf of, but the connection obligeth us to conclude, it was the form of God, which he had juſt mentioned. But our Lord did not diveſt himſelf of miraculous powers. Theſe he retained through the whole courſe of his miniſtry, and was as capable of exerting them at one time as at any, viz. whenever the great end, for which they were given, could be anſwered by the exerciſe of them. It cannot, therefore, be ſaid, that Jeſus emptied himſelf of the form of God, if that expreſſion denote the miraculous powers, which were beſtowed upon him when he began his miniſtry. It would, in other caſes, be deemed a manifeſt violation of truth, to affirm that a perſon had diveſted himſelf of any thing; an eſtate, for inſtance; when it was ſtill in his own poſſeſſion, and he had the ſame right and property in it as ever. It is not the deſign of this compariſon, to inſinuate, that our Lord had the ſame authority over miraculous powers, that a man hath over his civil property. They were not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, his own, and abſolutely under his direction.

rection. They were the power of God, and exerciſed when divine wiſdom ſaw fit. This Jeſus himſelf hath declared, John v. 30. xiv. 10. *I can of my own ſelf do nothing, &c. The Father, who dwelleth in me, he doth the works.*

This, however, makes no difference with reſpect to the ſubject under conſideration. For, in whatever ſenſe our Saviour was inveſted with miraculous powers, at the commencement of his miniſtry, in the very ſame ſenſe he continued, through the whole of it, to poſſeſs them; and, conſequently, could not be ſaid, with regard to them, to have emptied himſelf of the form of God. The learned writer of the critical inquiry before mentioned, ſpeaks of our Lord's *aſſuming* the form of God at different times. "And when at any time he took upon "him the glorious or godlike form." This language is very different from that of the apoſtle, who giveth not the leaſt intimation of his *taking* it upon him at all (and it is far more reaſonable to believe, he was poſſeſſed of it by the mere donation of his Almighty Father, than by any act of his own) much leſs, of his aſſuming it ſeveral times. St. Paul ſaith, *Who being in the form of God, emptied himſelf, and took the form of a ſervant, &c.* Whereas this writer repreſents him, at one time, aſſuming the form of God, and at another, the form of a ſlave. Such a ſtriking diſſimilarity in their manner of expreſſing themſelves, on this ſubject, renders it probable their ideas of it were not the ſame.

Another

Another paſſage of ſcripture, which bears a conſiderable reſemblance to this, and deſerves particular attention, is in 2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, though he was rich, yet for your ſakes became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might become rich.* St. Paul, in theſe words, appears to me, to refer to our Lord's exiſtence, in a ſtate of glory and happineſs in the celeſtial realms, before his appearance in this world. This might, with great propriety, be ſtiled riches, and his voluntary exchanging it for the poor and afflicted condition of humanity for our ſakes, in order to enrich us with treaſures, reſembling thoſe which he had poſſeſſed, diſcovers amazing benevolence and grace. This interpretation is not only moſt honourable to Jeſus, but preſerves us from the neceſſity of putting the leaſt force upon the apoſtle's language. It is, in my opinion at leaſt, obvious, eaſy, and natural. But can the ſame be ſaid of that which repreſents our Saviour as rich only in the miraculous gifts, which were beſtowed upon him in this world? There ſeems to be no propriety in ſaying, though he was rich in miraculous gifts, yet he became poor; ſince there is no connection betwixt thoſe extraordinary endowments and wealth, nor any oppoſition detween them and low circumſtances in the preſent life. Miraculous powers have generally been conferred upon perſons in low ſtations, and were never deſigned to raiſe them to external dignity and affluence.

If

If the apoſtle mean no more than that our Lord was endowed with miraculous powers, his language might be reverſed. It might, with more propriety, be ſaid, who though he was poor, yet he became rich, ſince he was deſcended from very poor parents, and lived a conſiderable time expoſed to the hardſhips of poverty, before he was inveſted with miraculous gifts. Such an expreſſion would, no doubt, have a ſtrange ſound, becauſe it requires uncommon penetration, to diſcover any grace in a poor man's becoming rich. It might, however, with ſtrict truth, be applied to Jeſus, if he was not rich in heavenly glory before his coming into this world.

The ſacred writer, in this declaration, celebrates the grace of our Lord, who was rich in becoming poor. But where is the grace of a perſon's becoming poor, who is born of poor parents? In this caſe, poverty is the conſequence of his birth, which depended upon the diſpenſations of Divine Providence, and was not, in the leaſt degree, owing to himſelf. If, therefore, our Redeemer had no exiſtence before his incarnation, there was no merit in his being poor, any more than in the poverty of any other man.

Some, perhaps, may be ready to ſay, our Lord might have employed his miraculous power, to have raiſed himſelf, to worldly power and riches. But this, I apprehend, is a great miſtake. The wiſdom of God, would not have ſuffered his power, which wrought our Saviour's miracles, to be exerciſed to promote any ſecular ends.

ends. And had Jeſus endeavoured to make this uſe of it, he would have found himſelf altogether feeble and impotent. Nay, the mere deſire of employing it for ſuch purpoſes, indulged in his breaſt, would have rendered him unworthy of his Almighty Father's protection and ſupport.

The fickle multitude was indeed diſpoſed, in a tranſient fit of admiration, to have advanced him to regal dignity. But what could the zeal of an unarmed crowd have availed, againſt the courage and diſcipline of the Roman legions? Had he yielded to their vain deſires, deſtruction muſt ſoon have overwhelmed him, and his deluded adherents.

Far, I am ſenſible, was our Saviour from entertaining the leaſt deſire of temporal power and wealth. He, no doubt, beheld theſe things with total indifference; yet as he was born poor, and had it not in his power to enrich himſelf, there was no more merit or grace, merely in his being poor, if he did not exiſt before his incarnation, than there is in the unavoidable poverty of any other man.

Should a perſon reſign any temporal advantages, and ſubmit to poverty, for the good of mankind, we ſhould admire and extol his benevolence, in becoming poor on that account. In this view, the conduct of ſome of our Lord's diſciples, who left all and followed him, deſerves our eſteem. Indeed, if our Redeemer did not fill an exalted and happy ſtation in the heavenly world, before his conception and birth, the great encomiums given his humility and grace, in

this and the paſſage before explained, may be applied, in the ſame ſenſe, to ſeveral of his apoſtles. Though they were in the form of God, yet they emptied themſelves of it; they made no parade of their miraculous powers, and did not arrogate to themſelves honour on their account. And when at any time they aſſumed this godlike form, they ſoon laid it aſide, and took on them the form of mean poor men. Though they were rich in miraculous gifts, yet ſuch was their grace, that they became poor, ſubmitted to the hardſhips of poverty.

Such an application of theſe remarkable places of holy ſcripture, will, no doubt, appear unjuſtifiable to many; and yet, unleſs the doctrine of our Saviour's pre-exiſtence be allowed, the propriety of it cannot be denied. For if the contrary ſcheme be true, I would aſk, in what inſtances did our Lord manifeſt his humility and grace in which his apoſtles did not diſcover theirs? Did he ſubmit to contempt and reproach? They likewiſe were accounted the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things. Did he give up any temporal advantages? He never poſſeſſed any. Whereas ſome of them gave up their all, and forfeited the favour of the great and learned, which they had enjoyed. Was our Lord expoſed to want, to ſcourging, and a painful ignominious death. And, did not they ſuffer *frequently*, hunger and nakedneſs, impriſonment and ſtripes, and at laſt expire in diſgrace and torment?

The notion, that our Saviour was *rich* only in miraculous gifts, detracts greatly from the merit

rit of his character. It degrades all the expreſſions of his humility and grace, to a level with the diſplays which ſome of his apoſtles made of theſe virtues. Nay, might we not ſay, it gives them the advantage of him, ſince their labours were continued longer, and their ſufferings more numerous than his? But the manner in which the moſt eminent of them ſpeaks of our Lord's benevolence, encourageth more honourable ſentiments of it, than are conſiſtent with this notion. He is in raptures when he mentions it, and labours for words to expreſs it. Eph. iii. 18, 19.—*may be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, that paſſeth knowledge.* Now can it, after all, be thought, our Saviour gave no other, no ſtronger proof of his love, than St. Paul and other apoſtles gave of their love? The contrary is highly probable. Indeed, without admitting this, it will be difficult, if not impoſſible, to vindicate his deſcription of our Redeemer's benevolence, and to account for the aſtoniſhment it appears to have excited in h s mind.

A ſimilar inference may be drawn from the manner in which our Saviour hath repreſented the love of God, in ſending him into the world. John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten ſon, &c.* A conſiderable ſtreſs appears to be laid upon the terms, *only-begotten ſon*; and if our Lord enjoyed glory and happineſs in the preſence of God in heaven, and was an object of his affection and delight, it was amazing benevolence indeed, in the Supreme Be-

ing, to ſend him into this world, and give him up to ſuffering and death for our ſalvation, and ought to be celebrated for ever, in the warmeſt ſtrains of gratitude and praiſe.

Theſe, and ſuch like repreſentations, of divine benevolence and our Saviour's love, ſuppoſe his pre-exiſtence, and favour the literal interpretation of thoſe places of ſcripture, which, in their plain and obvious meaning, expreſsly teach it. A few of which we ſhall briefly conſider. The writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, i. 2. having mentioned our Lord, ſaith, *by whom alſo he*, viz. God, *made the worlds*, δι ȣ και τȣς αιωνας επoιησεν. The word tranſlated *worlds*, ſhould have been rendered *ages*, and denotes the religious diſpenſations, which God hath granted to mankind, the laſt and moſt excellent of which chriſtians enjoy. Theſe ages or diſpenſations, we are informed, God made or conſtituted by his ſon. He muſt, therefore, have exiſted long before his incarnation. But the original δι ȣ, it will perhaps be ſaid, might have been differently tranſlated. Inſtead of *by whom*, it might have been rendered *with reſpect to whom*. Poſſibly there may be one example of this nature, out of ſome hundreds, though I do not recollect any ſuch. Such a meaning of the Greek is at leaſt extraordinary; and what occaſion is there for recurring to it here. Doth it improve the ſenſe of the ſacred author? Juſt the contrary. It ſeems hardly credible, that God ſhould make his diſpenſations with reſpect to one, who, upon our opponent's ſcheme, was but a man. For, is *one man*, an object of ſuch vaſt importance in the

the ſchemes of infinite wiſdom, that they ſhould be planned with a particular view to him? Had the apoſtle ſaid, that a particular man was made of God, with reſpect to a diſpenſation, the ſentiment would have been natural, as divine wiſdom always appoints proper means, for executing its kind deſigns. Whereas, on the contrary, to affirm, that God made not one diſpenſation merely, but diſpenſations (which ſeems to include all relating to this world) with reſpect to one man, is a ſurpriſing aſſertion, and can hardly be thought to have proceeded from a perſon endowed with heavenly wiſdom.

Our Lord, in ſeveral places, ſpeaks of himſelf as having been in heaven, and coming down from heaven, John vi. 38. *For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, &c.* The Jews underſtood his expreſſions of this kind in their literal ſenſe, and were enraged at him, who appeared no more than a man, for pretending he had been in heaven, ver. 41, 42. *The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he ſaid, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they ſaid, Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? How is it then that he ſaith, I came down from heaven.*

In the ſame chapter, ver. 62, he ſaith, *If ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man aſcend up where he was before.* As he had been treating, in this diſcourſe, of his coming down from heaven, it is reaſonable to believe, he had that in his thoughts, when he ſpoke of aſcending where he was before, and, conſequently, that he had actually been in heaven. If he had never been there, what

end could ſuch an expreſſion as this have anſwered? It certainly had a ſtrong tendency to lead men into a miſtake. Such a tendency, as few perſons of ſimplicity, could, in my judgment, be ſuppoſed able to reſiſt.

In another converſation with the Jews, John viii. 58. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am*, or *I was*. The Jews, we find, underſtood him to mean, he was actually in being before the patriarch exiſted, and he ſuffered them to continue in that opinion, notwithſtanding it expoſed him to their indignation, and endangered his life. It is difficult to account for our Saviour's uſing this language, if he had not exiſted before Abraham, ſince it ſo naturally betrayed them into an error, and increaſed their hatred of him. Doth it not ſeem reaſonable to think, he would have clothed his ſentiments in language more eaſy to be underſtood, or when he found his meaning to be groſsly miſtaken, and his perſon in imminent danger, having corrected their error, and thus have prevented the dangerous effects of their reſentment?

Again; our Lord, in a ſolemn addreſs to God, a little before his death, prays to be reſtored to the glory he had enjoyed with him in heaven, before the creation of the world, John xvii. 5. *O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*. In this ſenſe, it may be preſumed, all, who are unacquainted with religious controverſies, will underſtand him: And no words are better calculated to inform

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us, that he was poſſeſſed of glory before his incarnation. Another ſenſe, indeed, hath been put upon them, by ſome learned men, who ſuppoſe our Lord prays to be exalted, not to any glory which he had with God before the world was, but to that glory which God intended he ſhould have with him, or to the glory which he might be ſaid to have had in the divine decree. This, it is too plain to be denied, is far from being the natural and obvious meaning of our Saviour's words. In the day of judgment he hath declared, Matt. xxv. 34. he will ſay to the righteous, *Inherit the kingdom*, not which you had, but the kingdom *PREPARED for you, from the foundation of the world.* Now, if our Lord had prayed only for happineſs *deſigned* for him by the divine decree, how natural would it have been for him to have expreſſed himſelf in ſuch plain and proper language, as he hath uſed with regard to the felicity of the righteous. They had their kingdom from the foundation of the world, in the ſame ſenſe that our Lord had his glory, before the world was, if he did not exiſt before his incarnation. And yet how different is the language, in which he hath ſpoken on theſe ſubjects, and how reaſonable is it to think he deſigned it to convey different ideas!

Upon the whole, it is not eaſy to conceive of any words, that would more plainly expreſs his pre-exiſtence, than ſeveral that he hath uſed. He ſaith, he came down from heaven, and ſpeaks of aſcending where he was before. He declares he was before Abraham, and had glory

with his Father before the world was. Now if this language do not teach his pre-exiſtence, what expreſſions would have been ſufficient to have convinced men of its truth? Should it, for inſtance, have been ſaid, he was happy ages before his appearance in this world. Yes, it would be replied, in the decree of God, not that he enjoyed any happineſs, or had any exiſtence before his conception. Or ſhould this expreſſion have been uſed; He exiſted long before his incarnation. This language, it would be ſaid, is figurative, and means no more, than that God determined, long before his birth, that he ſhould be brought into being. Should the ſacred ſcripture have affirmed, he reſigned the godlike ſtation he filled, and appeared in the mean condition of a man; this would be explained to ſignify, that he made no oſtentatious diſplay of his miraculous powers.

The manner of interpreting ſcripture, to which ſome learned men have recourſe on this ſubject, if it was univerſal, would, in my opinion, render the meaning of the ſacred writers quite uncertain. It offers ſuch violence to their language, that all the learning and eloquence of its patrons cannot make it appear juſt and reaſonable. Nothing but abſolute neceſſity can vindicate ſuch ſtraining of ſcriptural expreſſions. But there is no neceſſity of uſing it here. The doctrine which they teach, in their literal and obvious ſenſe, is not abſurd or unreaſonable. Our Saviour's humiliation, upon the ſcheme of his pre-exiſtence, is, no doubt, a miraculous or ſupernatural event; but yet not unreaſonable or incredible.

incredible. The chriſtian diſpenſation itſelf is ſupernatural; and, therefore, no believer of it can, with any conſiſtency, object to the humiliation of our Redeemer, merely becauſe it was an event different from thoſe which happen according to the common laws of nature.

But no end, it may be ſaid, could be anſwered by ſuch an abaſement of an exalted ſpirit, but what might as well have been anſwered without it. A perſon, who had no exiſtence before his conception, being endowed with miraculous powers, might, with equal ſucceſs, have executed the ſchemes of divine mercy; and therefore it is incredible that infinite wiſdom, which doth nothing in vain, ſhould have appointed ſuch an extraordinary humiliation.

In reply to this objection it may be obſerved, that ſeveral things are here taken for granted, which it is impoſſible to prove. It ſuppoſeth that no miraculous fact is incredible, unleſs we are able to diſcover the ends which it is adapted to anſwer. But ſuch a principle hath not the leaſt foundation in reaſon or ſcripture. The deſigns and ends of many particular acts of Divine Providence, muſt be concealed from the view of mankind, in the preſent imperfect ſtate. And it would, certainly, betray the want of a proper deference to divine wiſdom, to diſpute the truth of any ſupernatural event, merely becauſe the reaſons of it are not diſcoverable by the human mind. The *conception* of Jeſus, we are aſſured by the ſacred hiſtory, was miraculous, and the reaſons of it are unknown. Yet no chriſtian will, upon this account, diſbelieve the

the relation given of it in the New Teſtament. He would, indeed, be juſtly thought a ſtranger to the humble ſpirit of a chriſtian, who had the vanity to ſay, "Such a ſupernatural event "could anſwer no valuable end. A perſon "conceived in a natural manner, might have "executed as well the ſcheme of divine mercy; "and it is incredible that God, who is infinite "in wiſdom, ſhould work a miracle without "neceſſity."

Farther; As this objection againſt the humiliation of our Saviour depends upon a groundleſs principle, ſo it advances an erroneous aſſertion. Some valuable ends, the great event juſt mentioned, is manifeſtly well calculated to anſwer. It diſplays the humility and benevolence of our Lord in the moſt illuſtrious manner, and thus raiſeth his character to the higheſt pitch of excellence. It cannot, with the leaſt colour of reaſon, be pretended, that a man, who had no exiſtence before he was born of poor parents, and confined to a low ſtation in life, could exhibit an example of humility, condeſcenſion and benevolence, comparable with that which, upon the pre-exiſtent ſcheme, the Son of God muſt have diſplayed. For an exalted and glorious being, happy in the preſence and love of his Almighty Father, voluntarily, cheerfully to reſign his glory, and leave the realms of eternal bliſs, to deſcend to this ignorant and ſinful world, to unite himſelf to a human body with all its infirmities, in order to ſuffer poverty, reproach, torment, and death, that he might form mankind to virtue, and exalt them to glory and bleſſedneſs

bleſſedneſs in the heavenly kingdom, demonſtrates humility and grace, which it is impoſſible ſufficiently to admire and celebrate! This muſt awake fervent gratitude in every ingenuous breaſt, and excite all conſiderate grateful chriſtians to devote themſelves to the honour of ſuch an aſtoniſhing benefactor, and with pleaſure to purſue the courſe he hath ſet before them to perfection and happineſs.

And as the humiliation of our Saviour diſplays, in ſo remarkable a manner, his humility and benevolence, ſo it likewiſe demonſtrates, in the ſtrongeſt light, the compaſſion and mercy of his heavenly Father, who formed the ſcheme of our redemption, and appointed him to carry it into execution. How ſtrong the benevolence, how tender the compaſſion of the Supreme Being for the ſinful periſhing children of men, which induced him to ſend his only ſon, his beloved ſon, the object of his *peculiar* affection and delight, from his boſom, and give him up to the various evils of life, and the torments of death, in order to enrich us with the treaſures of righteouſneſs in this world, and of inconceivable glory and happineſs in his eternal kingdom. This gives the moſt amiable views of the divine goodneſs, and may cauſe every one to cry out with aſtoniſhment and gratitude, in the words of St. John, *God is love!* O may ſuch an amazing manifeſtation of his benevolence engage my attention, raiſe my eſteem, inflame my love, animate my gratitude, and excite me, with pleaſure, to devote myſelf to his glory and ſervice!

It cannot, then, with any colour of reaſon, be ſaid, that our Saviour's humiliation anſwers no good end. The general view, juſt given, of that remarkable event, plainly ſheweth the contrary. If the value of every thing in religion depend upon its tendency to promote rectitude of heart and life, certainly the belief of this event muſt be thought of conſiderable importance: For it ſupplieth us with the nobleſt examples, and addreſſeth more affecting motives to our hearts, than can be drawn from the contrary ſcheme. This, indeed, appears ſo plain and evident, upon the ſlighteſt conſideration of it, that formal arguments to prove it are unneceſſary, and might juſtly be deemed tedious.

The good effects of our Lord's incarnation upon mankind, are manifeſt, and, it is not improbable, extend to other beings. Such a remarkable diſplay of humility and benevolence, may naturally be ſuppoſed to animate them, in the performance of the various ſervices, which are appointed them by the Sovereign of heaven and earth. *Angels are ſent forth to miniſter to them who will be heirs of ſalvation*, Heb. i. 14. And muſt not ſuch a ſtriking example of condeſcenſion and grace, excite their emulation, and engage them to imitate it with conſtancy, diligence and pleaſure? The Son of God is now their Lord as well as ours, and therefore his conduct juſtly claims their particular regard and imitation. His humiliation, upon the preexiſtent ſcheme, was a proper ground for his being rewarded with dominion over them, as well as over mankind.

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He gained it by diſtinguiſhed merit. Greater merit cannot poſſibly be conceived of, than was diſplayed in this event; and therefore, no doubt, thoſe benevolent beings, inſtead of envying him, will rejoice in the dignity to which he is advanced, and magnify divine wiſdom and righteouſneſs, in conſtituting him their king. Whereas, if our Saviour was but a man, his being inveſted with authority over theſe glorious ſpirits, would be altogether ſtrange and unaccountable. It ſeems greatly diſproportioned to the merit, that any man could manifeſt, in the labours and ſufferings of a few years.

But it is ſaid, "If Chriſt was the firſt, and only immediately derived being, by whom God made the world, how ſhould he gain any exaltation, by receiving a bright reſplendent human body, and being King and Lord of good men in this world, Judge of mankind, or being higher than the angels, ſince, upon this hypotheſis, he was vaſtly ſuperior to them before?"

This objection, it may be obſerved, doth not, in the leaſt, affect the pre-exiſtent ſcheme in general. It is levelled againſt thoſe only, who maintain that Chriſt was the only being immediately derived from God, and employed by him in making the world. Theſe particulars are not neceſſarily connected with our Lord's exiſtence in heaven before his incarnation. It is very poſſible to believe, he had glory with God before the world was, without determining particularly the degree of it, or whether he was employed in making the world. This objection therefore, doth not oppoſe any thing that

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I have aſſerted, and ſo might be diſmiſſed without farther notice. Yet even allowing, that God by him made the world, it would not neceſſarily follow, that he had any dominion or government over the angels, before his incarnation, though he was ſuperior to them in perfection and happineſs. And if he had not, he is now advanced higher than he was before, ſince he is their king now as well as ours, and ſo glorioufly rewarded for his humiliation, labours, ſufferings and death.

Moſt religious (and indeed other) ſubjects, believers themſelves will acknowledge, are attended with difficulties. And it is not ſupriſing, if our Saviour's pre-exiſtence and humiliation are liable to ſome objections. Yet all of them, I think, admit of a rational ſolution. Several things alledged againſt them are founded entirely on our ignorance, or ſome particular circumſtances which have been ſuppoſed, though unneceſſarily, to be connected with them. I ſhall not, however, abuſe your indulgence by examining theſe objections. It is ſufficient for me, to refer to the remarks on Dr. Lardner's, &c. publiſhed in the ſixth number of the Repoſitory, vol. i. which I hope will give ſatisfaction to moſt candid minds; or at leaſt convince them that the difficulties under which this ſubject hath been ſuppoſed to labour, are by no means ſo great, as to counterbalance the plain and ſtrong evidence of divine revelation in its favour. To conclude; I ſincerely wiſh, that all who believe the doctrine of our Lord's pre-exiſtence and humiliation, may experience the good effects,

which

which it hath a natural tendency to produce, on their tempers and lives. As they are ſenſible, it demonſtrates the grace of God, as well as the humility and compaſſion of their Saviour in the ſtrongeſt light, and thus addreſſeth more affecting motives to the heart than the contrary notion: So I hope, they will duly regard the peculiar obligations that are upon them, and make it their prevailing concern, to diſtinguiſh themſelves by fervent love and gratitude to God and their Redeemer, and by cheerful, univerſal and perſevering obedience to the divine will.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

The following Remarks are what occurred in reading over the books to which they refer. They might have been enlarged into a volume or volumes, but will, perhaps, be leſs tedious; if not more acceptable to ſome readers, in their native brevity; at leaſt will take up leſs room (if worthy of any) amongſt ſo many better things in your valuable Repoſitory; *ſuch as they are, they are ſubmitted to your diſpoſal, by*

Gentlemen,

Your humble ſervant,

W. W.

Curſory

Curſory Remarks on Chub's Farewell to his Readers.

MR. Chub ſays, Vol. I. p. 7. in his *Remarks on the Scriptures*, that "The "bible contains many things that are greatly "below and unworthy of the Supreme Deity."

Suppoſe thoſe proverbs, maxims, or pieces of hiſtory he here inſtances in, to proceed immediately and entirely from divine inſpiration (which there is no neceſſity to ſuppoſe) yet nothing is below or unworthy of the Supreme Being that tends, in the leaſt, to the benefit of any of his creatures. Would it have been unworthy of a Solomon, or a Sir Iſaac Newton, to teach his child its A, B, C, with a feſcue? Nor is what follows unworthy of him, if conſidered as a prophecy, or the prophet's acquieſcing in a prophecy, rather than a *malevolent wiſh*.

The account of the travels and adventures of Naomi, &c. was no ways impertinent to introduce an account of one of our Saviour's anceſtors.

A very little candor, added to the author's natural ingenuity might, one would think, have enabled him to reconcile the perceptive parts of the bible, which he refers to p. 9. and 10. The laws of Moſes were the laws of a community. The rules and maxims of our Saviour are perſonal. And though there be a ſort of natural equity in the *retaliation of injuries*, yet any community, and much more a private perſon, has a right, and may have very good reaſon for relaxing

relaxing that puniſhment, and forgiving a perſonal injury, or for being backward to return a haſty one, and give the aggreſſor time to cool, to think, and repent of his raſhneſs, rather than exaſperate his preſent frenzy by a haſty reſiſtance, and catch it of him. How juſt and beautiful is a parallel goſpel precept: "Be "not overcome of evil; but overcome evil "with good?" Forbearance and forgiveneſs are truly godlike.

The Jews, in our Saviour's time, and long before, had trumped up many traditions and traditional explanations of their law, perverſive of the laws of God and reaſon. Theſe are the *ſayings of them of old time*, our Saviour refers to and corrects, which the ſcribes and phariſees deemed themſelves righteous in obſerving, though they thereby evaded the ſpirit and intention of the law. See Matt. v. 20. where he introduces theſe very corrections, with obſerving to his followers, that *their righteouſneſs muſt exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and phariſees.*

Our Saviour's injunction about ſwearing, plainly appears to refer to *common converſation*, by his ſaying, *Let your communications be Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.* And it appears from another paſſage, that they had introduced into their converſation a variety of petty oaths, as, *by their head, by Jeruſalem, by the temple, &c.*

I am really amazed at ſo ſenſible an author's trifling as he does through theſe and ſeveral following pages; particularly his interpretation of our Saviour's words, Luke xxii. 35, 36. the evident meaning of which appears to me no

more than this, viz. " The time of trial that is " immediately approaching, is very different " from that when I ſent you out to preach to the " loſt ſheep of the Houſe of Iſrael, ſaying, *The* " *kingdom of heaven is at hand.* You then met " with no rude companies with ſwords and " ſtaves, and needed no ſuch weapons to de- " fend yourſelves; but now ſuch preparations " would be of the utmoſt neceſſity, were we to " ſtand upon our defence." It implies no order to make ſuch preparation, or to make uſe of what weapons they had. Nor forbids that any of his followers ſhould ever uſe ſuch in the neceſſary defence of their lives, their property, or their country; but only repreſents, in a ſtriking and beautiful manner, the violent aſſault that would immediately be made upon them. The drawing a couple of ſwords againſt ſuch a multitude, was the likely way to periſh by the ſword, or if by a miraculous interpoſition, by the help of more than twelve legions of angels they could have prevailed, yet how then muſt the ſcriptures be fulfilled that thus it muſt be.

Our Saviour expected his followers ſhould ever interpret his words by the rules of reaſon and common ſenſe, and was diſpleaſed with them when they did not ſo. See Matt. xvi. 11. *How is it that ye do not underſtand, &c.* Had the author obſerved this method, he might have ſpared many poor reflections he has made on— *Swear not at all. Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures on earth. Take no thought for the morrow. Call not your rich neighbours to your feaſts. Love your enemies, &c.* He would have ſeen that our Saviour's

Saviour's view was to moderate our paſſions and deſires after earthly things, not to extinguiſh them; and to recommend great benevolence, as the perfection of a chriſtian, as it is, indeed, the perfection of God's moral character, though this author will have it to be his wiſdom. Nor does *loving our enemies* imply our loving and treating enemies and friends, good and bad men *alike*, as he affects to interpret that divine precept. How hard did this author ſtrain his invention to find abſurdities in the bible, and in our Saviour's excellent documents? Call theſe *laws* (if you will) and our Saviour a *law-giver* (though rather a promulgator of God's laws) the real meaning of the law-giver, ſo far as it can be underſtood, is the *law*, the *ſpirit of the law*, though the letter of it may be liable to be miſconſtrued. All law is ſuppoſed to be founded in reaſon, and the divine law certainly is ſo, therefore reaſon is the beſt interpreter of it; and every man's reaſon muſt interpret for himſelf, only it ſtands him upon to do it honeſtly.

What follows in this part about the clergy's peculiar authority to interpret the ſcriptures, I have no objections to. It is eaſy, however, to ſee the ſource of this author's prejudices, viz. an exceſſive apprehenſion of prieſtcraft.

P. 54. The author expreſſes his contempt of infant baptiſm, by calling it an *inſignificant ceremony*. A *ceremony* it is, but I think equally *ſignificant* with *adult baptiſm*, or with the other chriſtian ceremony, *the Lord's ſupper*. But I will not enter here into a diſcuſſion of thoſe

points. I muſt not, however, omit to take notice how the author, in his note, p. 60. as well as in many other places, is carried away by an inveterate prejudice againſt St. Paul, repreſenting him here as an advocate for abſolute paſſive obedience (in the political and Sacheverel ſenſe) to the worſt of tyrants, as if St. Paul's head was as full of politics and revolutions in ſtates as his own, when he was writing this remark. To me it ſeems more natural to ſuppoſe him only cautioning the Roman chriſtians againſt a turbulent diſpoſition, and recommending to them, for the credit of their religion, a peaceable behaviour under whatever government Providence ſhould fix over them. But take Mr. Locke's ſenſe of the place, who was far from being behind this author in ſound reaſoning, or zeal for civil or religious liberty, and far before him in candour.

"Above all others (ſays Mr. Locke) the "Jews were apt to have an inward reluctance "and indignation, againſt the power of any "Heathen over them. Theſe the apoſtle "thought it neceſſary to reſtrain, and therefore "ſays, in the language of the Jews, *every ſoul*, "*i. e.* every perſon among you, whether Jew "or Gentile, muſt live in ſubjection to the "civil magiſtrate. We ſee by what St. Peter "ſays on the like occaſion, that there was great "need that chriſtians ſhould have this duty "inculcated to them, leſt any among them "ſhould uſe their liberty for a cloak of malici-"ouſneſs, or miſbehaviour. The doctrine of "chriſtianity, was a doctrine of liberty. And

"St.

" St. Paul had taught them in this epiſtle,
" that all chriſtians were free from the Moſaic
" law. Hence corrupt and miſtaking men,
" eſpecially Jewiſh converts, impatient of any
" Heathen dominion, might be ready to infer
" that chriſtians were exempt from ſubjec-
" tion to the laws of Heathen governments.
" This he obviates by telling them, that all
" other governments derived the power they
" had from God, as well as that of the Jews,
" though they had not the whole frame of
" their government immediately from him.
" Whether we take *powers* here in the abſtract,
" for political authority, or in the concrete, for
" the perſons, *de facto*, exerciſing political power
" and juriſdiction, the ſenſe will be the ſame,
" viz. that chriſtians, by virtue of being chriſ-
" tians, are not any ways exempt from obedi-
" ence to the civil magiſtrates, nor ought by
" any means to reſiſt them. Though by what
" is ſaid, ver. 3. it ſeems that St. Paul meant
" here, magiſtrates having and exerciſing a law-
" ful power; but whether the magiſtrates in
" being were or were not ſuch, and conſequently
" were or were not to be obeyed, that *chriſtia-*
" *nity* gave them no peculiar power to examine;
" they had the common rights of others, their
" fellow citizens, but have no diſtinct privi-
" leges as *chriſtians*; and therefore we ſee, v. 7.
" where he enjoins the paying of tribute or cuſ-
" tom, it is in theſe words, *Render to all their*
" *due; tribute to whom tribute is due, honour*
" *to whom honour, &c.* but who it was, to
" whom any of theſe or any other dues or

" right belonged, he decides not; for that, he " leaves them to be determined by the laws and " conſtitutions of their country." I add here a note of Dr. Taylor upon the place.

" This epiſtle (ſays he) was wrote in the " fourth year of the Emperor Nero, about ſix " years after Claudius had expelled the Jews " from Rome. It is not improbable that (as " Suetonius relates in the life of Claudius) this " was occaſioned by the tumultuous diſpoſition " of the Jews; they had notions relating to go- " vernment, favourable to none but their own, " and it was with great reluctance they ſubmit- " ted to a foreign juriſdiction. The chriſtians, " under a notion of their being the people of " God, and the ſubjects of his kingdom, might " be in danger of being infected with theſe un- " ruly rebellious ſentiments; therefore the apo- " ſtle ſhews them that they were, notwithſtand- " ing their honours and privileges as chriſ- " tians, bound by the ſtrongeſt obligations of " conſcience, to be ſubject to civil government."

" I cannot forbear obſerving (adds he) the ad- " mirable ſkill and dexterity with which the " apoſtle has handled the ſubject.

" Upon every point, his views in writing are " always very comprehenſive, and he takes into " his thoughts and inſtructions, all parties that " may probably reap any benefit by them. As " chriſtianity was then growing, and the powers " of the world began to take notice of it; it " was not unlikely this letter would fall into the " hands of the Roman magiſtrates; and when- " ever that happened, it was right not only that

" they

" they ſhould ſee chriſtianity was no favourer of " ſedition; but likewiſe, that they ſhould have " an opportunity of reading their own duty " and obligations. But they were generally too " inſolent to be inſtructed in a plain *direct* way; " therefore the apoſtle, with a maſterly hand, " delineates and ſtrongly inculcates the magi- " ſtrate's duty while he is pleading his cauſe " with the ſubject, and eſtabliſhing his au- " thority upon the moſt true and ſolid grounds. " He dexterouſly ſides with the magiſtrate, and " vindicates his power againſt any ſubject who " might have imbibed ſeditious principles, or " might be inclined to give the government " any diſturbance; and under that advantage, " reads the magiſtrate a fine and cloſe lecture " upon the nature and ends of government. " A way of conveyance ſo ingenious and un- " exceptionable, that Nero himſelf, had this " epiſtle fallen into his hands, could not well " have miſſed ſeeing his duty, and yet would " have met with nothing flattering on the one " hand, nor offenſive and diſguſting on the " other. If the reader is attentive, he muſt " be pleaſed to ſee in how ſmall a compaſs, and " with how much dexterity, truth and gravity, " he affirms and explains the foundation, the " nature, the ends and juſt limits of the magi- " ſtrate's authority, while he his pleading his " cauſe, and teaching the ſubject the duty and " obedience due to governors?"

Nor is the author's next charge againſt St. Paul, in this long note, at all better ſupported. P. 62. " St. Paul's bold adventuring genius

(ſays he) "was moſt fully exemplified in his boldly extirpating Judaiſm by his own authority, "contrary to the deſign of his maſter, as well "as the ſentiments of all the other apoſtles."

For this anthor to talk of "a *bold adventrous genius*, in boldly extirpating what he "does not like or underſtand," is certainly ſpying a mote in St. Paul's eye, with a monſtrous beam of the ſame kind in his own. But to the charge.

The ceremonial law was peculiarly adapted to the Jews while they were poſſeſſed of the land of Canaan, Jeruſalem, and the Temple. It was never deſigned to be the religion of the world, but to keep them diſtinct from the reſt of the world, ſo long as the divine providence thought proper, and, perhaps, to anſwer ſome other occaſional temporary purpoſes. Our Saviour was to be a light to the Gentiles, to bleſs all nations, to bring in an everlaſting religion, or righteouſneſs, or terms of acceptance with God, and to cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe. Iſa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 6. Dan. ix. 24—27. Accordingly, though he himſelf in perſon, was not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the Houſe of Iſrael, yet he ordered his apoſtles to diſciple or proſelite all nations; and gave hints in his lifetime of the diſſolution of the Jewiſh conſtitution both in church and ſtate, in his ſpeech to the woman of Samaria; *The hour cometh when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet as Jeruſalem worſhip the Father.* John iv. 21. and in his foretelling the utter deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the Temple. It would have been very improper

for

for him to have been more explicit on ſuch a ſubject while he was preaching to the Jews, till his public miniſtry to that people was finiſhed; nor were his diſciples (being Jews) prepared for ſuch a doctrine, or able to bear it, till after our Saviour's reſurrection, when the promiſed ſpirit was ſhed upon them. At the time our Saviour made them this promiſe, he obſerved to them, *I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but you cannot bear them now; howbeit when he, the ſpirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,— and he will ſhew you things to come.* John xvi. 12, 13. And though the ſpirit of God came upon the apoſtles ſuddenly at the day of Pentecoſt, and enabled them, unlearned as they were, to ſpeak the various languages of perſons aſſembled at that time from all parts to Jèruſalem; it does not follow that he inſpired them *at once, and at that inſtant*, with all neceſſary truth. St. Peter, who was the firſt who preached the goſpel to the Gentiles, was forced to have his Jewiſh prejudices overcome by a particular viſion and divine revelation. And, therefore, he and all the other apoſtles, as well as Paul, aſſembled together, gave it as their joint opinion, that the Gentile converts were not to be brought under the ceremonial law of the Jews, notwithſtanding the Jewiſh chriſtians, for the little while their ſtate was to laſt, were not hindered from keeping up, amongſt themſelves, the ſo long eſtabliſhed cuſtom of their nation; a thing in itſelf, now that the deſign of it was anſwered, of no great conſequence to *them*, who were ſo ſoon to have their whole conſtitution overturned, but which would

would have been far otherwiſe to the Gentiles, had it been entailed upon them, as ſome zealous Jewiſh chriſtians would have had it. St. Paul, therefore, oppoſed this with all his might, though he prudently, and, I think, without any *culpable* compliance, circumciſed Timothy, his mother being a Jeweſs though his father was a Gentile, and purified himſelf, according to the ceremonial law, with four men who had a vow, to obviate a prejudice ſome Jewiſh chriſtians had taken up againſt him, which might have unhinged many of them, and cauſed them to fall off, a thing St. Paul would have ſubmitted to much greater hardſhips than this to prevent. See 1 Cor. viii. 13. His ſo far becoming all things to all men that he might win ſome, was not at all unbecoming him, or the ſincereſt man upon earth; it was bearing the infirmities of the weak, which is often, and was in theſe caſes, not only prudently and innocently, but kindly, generouſly and nobly done.

The moral law alone was *firſt* given the Jews after their deliverance out of Egypt, and in a moſt diſtinguiſhing aweful manner; the ceremonial law *afterwards*, and perhaps (circumciſion, the paſſover, the ſabbath, and ſome other commemorative feſtivals excepted) like the indulgence in point of divorces, for the hardneſs of their hearts; and had never been given them but for their adictedneſs to the idolatry of the Egyptians, which brake out in ſo aſtoniſhing a manner while Moſes was in the mount receiving from God the written *moral law*. See Jer. vii. 22. and vi. 20. Iſa. i. 11. Amos v. 21. *For I ſpake not unto your fathers, nor commanded*

manded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and ſacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, ſaying, Obey my voice. See Ezek. xx. 11. compared with v. 24, 25.

But ſuppoſing St. Paul had been the firſt broacher of this doctrine, yet had he no authority? And did he, as this author boldly affirms, pretend to none but his own reaſoning upon the caſe? Did he not avow a divine revelation? Did he not appeal to miracles wrought by him in all places for the proof of this authority? Mr. Hume, and many others I know, have worked themſelves up into a perſuaſion of the abſolute abſurdity and incredibility of all miracles; as if there were no powers ſuperior to the human, or any being that ever exerted ſuch powers ſince the firſt creation of the world, if really then; for if any deviation from the once ſettled courſe of nature be incredible, any new creation muſt be ſo, and the whole world muſt either have been from all eternity uncreated, or elſe produced by mere accident.

P. 145, &c. The author advances a tedious, and, in my mind, a very weak argument againſt St. John's account of Thomas's backwardneſs to believe our Saviour's reſurrection, and his conviction of it at laſt; and is for ſetting aſide this ſtory, "as a ridiculous forgery, added by "ſome other hand, becauſe it is not mentioned "by any of the other evangeliſts;" whereas the deſign of St. John's writing his goſpel ſo long after the other, which he muſt, no doubt, have

ſeen,

ſeen, ſeems to be on purpoſe to record ſome other circumſtances omitted by them.

The purpoſe Chriſt's reſurrection was immediately directed to, was not (as he affirms) "his "qualifying his diſciples, by giving them proper "inſtructions for preaching his goſpel to the "world." This was to be the buſineſs of the ſpirit. Nor "his commiſſioning or authoriz-"ing them to do ſo," though he took this occaſion to do it; but effectually to convince them of his own divine commiſſion and authority. Nor is there really any impropriety in commiſſioning them firſt, and inſtructing them afterwards, nor in giving them their commiſſion ſeparately, or repeatedly. He was not ſubject to the little rules and formalities cuſtom may have introduced amongſt us.

Suppoſing, with the author, that the other apoſtles had told Thomas of their ſeeing the print of the nails and of the ſpear, he might doubt of their accurate obſervation in ſuch a ſurprize, though not of their veracity. No report comes up to a perſon's own ſenſible ocular demonſtration. Or Thomas's own ſurprize might make him expreſs himſelf in theſe ſtrong haſty terms.

One of theſe appearances of our Saviour's ſeems to have been at Jeruſalem, another in Galilee. The accounts are too ſhort for us preciſely to adjuſt every particular. How eaſily might a perſon, who knew the whole affair, remove every ſhadow of inconſiſtency which theſe writers ſo eagerly catch at? Dr. Middleton, I remember, charges theſe ſacred hiſtorians with much

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ſuch an inconſiſtency, in their giving ſomething different accounts of the inſcription over our Saviour's croſs. *The King of the Jews.—This is the King of the Jews.—Jeſus of Nazareth the King of the Jews, &c.* Though in each he is ſtiled *The King of the Jews*, which was the offenſive part of the inſcription. It was wrote, we are told, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. It is poſſible that the Greek might differ from the Latin, and the Hebrew from both, as much as all this difference comes to, and yet no co-temporary would ever have found out the inconſiſtency. Such minute criticiſm was reſerved for modern triflers, who ſeem to expect theſe ſacred hiſtorians ſhould have been as ſcrupulouſly nice as an antiquarian carefully copying ſome antique inſcription.

The author's reaſoning concerning the exiſtence and unity of the Supreme Being is very juſt; but his objections againſt the Moſaic diſpenſation appear to me raſh and inconcluſive. He thinks it repreſents the Deity an arbitrary being, whoſe affections and actions are under no other direction than capricious humour and mere will; and an abettor of perſecuting men on the ſcore of religion. See p. 186. and the note p. 190. and he ſeems to think the God of the Jews like ſeveral gods of the other nations, an imaginary local deity, rather than the true God.

Can no way be found to juſtify the ways of God to man on the ſuppoſition of the divine authority of the Moſaic diſpenſation? Theſe writers, however, will not be at any pains for that purpoſe. They have a much readier way

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to get rid of any difficulties in the ſcripture hiſtory, by expunging it at once.

With regard to the Almighty's ſeeming partiality to Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, and their deſcendants, in preference to all the other families of the earth, particularly the Canaanites, whom he diſpoſſeſt to furniſh them with a land flowing with milk and honey. Is not the whole earth the Lord's, and the fullneſs thereof, the world and all that dwell therein? And may not he do what he will with his own, either with reſpect to particular perſons, or communities of men? He has, no doubt, wiſe reaſons for every thing he does, though we may not always comprehend them. Where this laſt happens to be the caſe, ſhall we preſently call it caprice, and deny him to have any hand in the event? His election of Jacob, with his poſterity, and reprobation of Eſau; his choice of Abraham, and rejecting, or comparatively neglecting all the other families of the earth, had no reſpect to the final ſtate of particular perſons, as too many of the friends, as well as enemies of divine revelation have erroneouſly ſuppoſed; but purely to the uſe God deſigned to make of them in this world.

Eſau might be as good a man as Jacob, for ought appears, and as acceptable to God; and ſo might many among the idolatrous nations, yea, among ſuch nations or communities of men whom God deſtroyed, or cauſed to be deſtroyed, for their general wickedneſs. Infants, at leaſt, among the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and amongſt thoſe who periſhed by the flood. The great Governor of the world may ſhew his diſpleaſure

diſpleaſure againſt the geneal prevailing wickedneſs and corruption of any country by a general calamity, or the utter extirpation of it, and yet do no injuſtice to individuals amongſt them, who may be of very different characters, ſuppoſing but another life after this.

In judging the world at laſt, God will appear to be no reſpecter of perſons; but theſe are his judgments of communities as communities. It is like ſcarifying, or even amputating a corrupt limb from the body for the benefit of the whole, to prevent the ſpreading of very groſs and incurable corruption of morals, and to be aweful warnings to other nations.

But this author ſuppoſes, that the Canaanites were ordered to be diſpoſſeſſed of their country, and even put to death for their *idolatry*, and that this ſeems to authorize perſecution for religious opinion; which is mere groundleſs conjecture. Idolaters they were, ſo were many other nations as well as they, for ſeveral hundred years before, of whom it was obſerved by God to Abraham, that *the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.* Gen. xv. 16. What, may we ſuppoſe, was yet wanting fully to juſtify ſo ſevere a treatment? Now the ſins of a community, which ſeem moſt provoking to God, and to bring remarkable judgments on any people, appear from ſcripture to be *violence*, *oppreſſion*, and unfeeling *cruelty* towards their fellow creatures, eſpecially *cruelty* practiſed under the notion of *religion*, as a thing acceptable to God.

The reaſon aſſigned by God himſelf for drowning the old world is this, *The earth was filled*

filled with violence. Gen. vi. 11, 12. It was a conſiderable degree of this cruel *violence,* as well as unnatural luſt, which provoked him to deſtroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The city of Nineveh, in their proclamation of a faſt, ſeem ſenſible, that it was for *violence* that was in their hands that they were threatened to be overthrown. Jonah iii. 8.

The Canaanites, even in Abraham's time, were not only idolaters, but ſo corrupt in their morals too, that Abraham was greatly ſolicitous, his ſon might not intermarry with them. Gen. xxiv. 3. for his own relations were tinged with idolatry. But probably the Canaanites had not then learnt that inhuman refinement in religion, to offer up human ſacrifices to their idols. This, however, they came to at laſt; and when God was about to execute his exemplary vengeance upon them, and give their land to his Iſraelites, he orders Moſes to ſpeak to the children of Iſrael, and warn them thus; *After the manner of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye ſhall not do.* Lev. xviii. 3. And among the inſtances of theſe doings, this is particularly mentioned, v. 21. *And thou ſhalt not let any of thy ſeed paſs through the fire to Molech, neither ſhalt thou profane the name of God, q. d.* by repreſenting him as pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices. See chap. xx. 3. *Defile not yourſelves in any of theſe things, for in all theſe the nations are defiled, therefore do I viſit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itſelf vomiteth out her inhabitants,* chap. xviii. 24, 25.

And though idolatry was a much more aggravated crime in the Iſraelites, than in any other nation

nation under heaven, yet did not God quite break with them, cauſe their cities to be overthrown, their warriors ſlain with the ſword, and ſend them into captivity for ſeventy years, till they fell into this moſt abominable part of the idolatry of the Canaanites. Jer. xxxii. 31.—*This city has been to me as a provocation of my anger—they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to cauſe their ſons and their daughters to paſs through the fire to Molech.* And God, by the prophet Ezekiel, enumerating the provoking ſins of his people, ſays, *Moreover, thou haſt taken thy ſons and thy daughters, whom thou haſt born unto me, and theſe haſt thou ſacrificed unto them (i. e.* to idols) *to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a ſmall matter?* xvi. 20. The Pſalmiſt ſays, cvi. 35—40. *They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and they ſerved their idols,* yea, *they ſacrificed their ſons and their daughters unto demons, and ſhed innocent blood, even the blood of their ſons and of their daughters, whom they ſacrified unto the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with* blood, therefore *was the wrath of the Lord kindled againſt his people, and he abhorred his own inheritance, &c.*

And although their long captivity cured them of *idolatry*, yet was this nation afterwards dreadfully puniſhed for their cruel murder of their promiſed Meſſiah, in which ſhocking act all their former cruelties to their prophets were, as it were, ſummed up, and ripened for ſuch exemplary national puniſhment.

The great deſign of God in ſeparating, and ſo long diſtinguiſhing that people, no doubt

was, to keep up the knowledge of one living and true God, and a religious regard to him, in oppoſition to the ſpreading and increaſing idolatry of all the other nations of the world. A deſign of ſo great importance, to the virtue and happineſs of mankind, as to be highly worthy of God. For this purpoſe did he exerciſe ſuch an extraordinary providence towards them, in delivering them out of bondage, conducting them through the Red Sea and the wilderneſs, putting them in poſſeſſion of the Promiſed Land, and being their King in every reſpect, as well as their God, till they ſolicited to have a king from amongſt themſelves, like the other nations round about them; in which he, in ſome meaſure, yielded to their importunity, perhaps to puniſh them for their fickleneſs; however he was ſtill their only *lawgiver*, and was it at all unreaſonable, that he ſhould make it death by law for any of them to acknowledge or worſhip any other god, which it could ſcarce be poſſible any of them ſhould do, out of conſcience or real opinion, but purely out of conformity to the popular faſhions of the countries around them, of which they were apt to be fooliſhly and exceſſively fond.

There may ſeem indeed, at firſt ſight, ſomething plauſible, but no more, I think, in what this author advances, concerning the deſtruction of the Amalekites, the two captains of fifty and their fifties, and the forty-two children who mocked Eliſha.

With regard to the Amalekites, God Almighty may, whenever he pleaſes, in the courſe of his providence, extirpate any nation, and their

their poſterity, root and branch; and may puniſh any man, or community, in their *poſterity* as well as *themſelves*, with regard to temporal life, or temporal affairs; and may make whom he will the inſtruments of his providence therein; and why not by expreſs revelation, to his appointed conductor of his Iſraelites on this occaſion, as well as at other times, by means of the natural paſſions, or wicked ambitious purpoſes of uninſpired men?

All the ſenſible or ſentimental part of mankind, have ever intereſted themſelves in the continuance and proſperity, or the reverſe, of their *poſterity*. Innumerable inſtances of this appear in the ſcripture hiſtory. Balaam wiſhed that he might die the death of *Jeſhurim*, *i. e.* of that diſtinguiſhed people whom he was called to curſe, *i. e.* that he might live and proſper; and that his *latter end*, *i. e.* his *poſterity*, might be like theirs, *i. e.* might laſt for ever. The Pſalmiſt ſays, *The* end *of the wicked ſhall be cut off.* This is the meaning of God's viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, and ſhewing mercy unto thouſands (of generations) of them that love him, and keep his commandments. Exod. xx. 5, 6. Which laſt clauſe, I apprehend, yet holds good in favour of faithful Abraham, whoſe natural deſcendants by Hagar, Keturah, and Eſau, perhaps, even now inhabit a conſiderable part of Aſia, as well as the yet diſtinct remnant of Jacob's poſterity, at preſent ſcattered through the world. Notwithſtanding which, the future and final ſtate of individuals,

will undoubtedly turn upon their own real perſonal character. In this reſpect, the ſon ſhall not die for the iniquity of the father, though in the other reſpect he often does.

After Amalek and his people were diſcomfitted, *The Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearſe it in the ears of Joſhua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, becauſe the hand of Amalek is againſt the throne of the Lord* (as it is in the margin) Exod. xvii. 14. That this was not done immediately, might be (as in the caſe of the Amorites) becauſe the iniquity of the Amalekites, though great, was not yet full. In the ſecond chapter of Deuteronomy, the Iſraelites were ordered not to hurt ſome of the nations, nor poſſeſs themſelves of any thing that was theirs, becauſe ſome of them were the children of Lot, and ſome of Eſau, Abraham's grandſon. And may not the God of heaven and earth, make theſe diſtinctions in the outward circumſtances, in the name, the proſperity and poſterity of perſons, families or nations, without being charged with injuſtice? What right has any man, or nation to life, or long life, or a poſterity? Balaam foretold of Amalek, that *his latter end ſhould be, that he periſh for ever.* Numb. xxiv. 20.

Elijah called for fire from heaven to conſume the two captains of fifty and their fifties. Not from a ſpirit of reſentment, like that with which our Saviour's diſciples would have had him call for fire from heaven to conſume the Samaritans (this is our author's innuendo) but from a ſpirit of

of prophecy, as appeared from God's anſwering his prayer; and God therein puniſhed *Ahaziah* rather than thoſe unhappy perſons who periſhed in his ſervice on this occaſion, who yet might themſelves be too well pleaſed with the haughty meſſage he employed them in. God Almighty may keep up his ſervants' character in what manner he pleaſes, as in the other caſe of Eliſha curſing, in the name of the Lord, or rather prophetically denouncing the judgment of God on forty-two children, as they are ſtiled, who mocked him, and whom this author, the more to move his readers compaſſion and blacken the ſtory, over and over ſtiles *little children*, who knew no better, &c. *Child* and *children* in ſcripture do not neceſſarily imply *little* children, witneſs the *Children of Iſrael*, and the apoſtles' addreſs to God, that they might be enabled to work miracles *in the name of his holy child Jeſus*. Acts iv. 30. and ver. 27. *againſt thy holy child Jeſus, &c.* Very probably they were ſuch as the ſcriptures ſtile *Children of Belial*. We know not their age, or the particular circumſtances of their guilt. It was always eſteemed a conſiderable duty of young perſons to reverence the aged, and the providence of God might take occaſion to make an example to that and future ages of theſe deſpiſers of ſuch, ſuppoſing (as this author does, without ground) they did not know him to be a prophet.

As to the author's ſuggeſtion that the God of the Jews was a local deity, like the God of Ekron, &c. it is certain the Jews conſidered him, as he really was, in a peculiar manner

their God (their covenant God) but at the ſame time as the Maker and Governor of the whole univerſe of heaven and earth, as is plain from innumerable paſſages in their books. I need only mention the firſt verſe of Geneſis. He might make uſe of the miniſtry of angels; he did ſo, no doubt, perhaps always does ſo in his government of the whole world; but they muſt be under his moſt juſt and wiſe direction. Whether any one in particular of theſe miniſtering ſpirits had the charge of that people is not ſo certain, but ſhall we raſhly charge ſuch miniſters of heaven with injuſtice or caprice, as if they were the miniſters of ſome fallible, weak or wicked earthly potentates? And yet even theſe we may be liable to cenſure wrongfully, ſometimes for want of proper lights.

Page 264. This author has an invidious fling at St. Paul for his unphiloſophical expreſſion of a *ſpiritual body*, 1 Cor. xv. 44. which only betrays his eagerneſs to diſparage that apoſtle, or any paſſage of ſcripture, ſince nobody can miſtake St. Paul's meaning, or object to that. We have another ſuch inſtance in p. 267—274. The author had learned from Mr. Collins to divert himſelf at St. Paul's expence, with Gal. iv. 21—26. but certainly never took the pains to peruſe Mr. James Pierce's Diſſertation on that paſſage, or theſe eight elaborate pages of his *Farewell* had probably been ſpared. Mr. Pierce has clearly ſhewn, that the great difficulty and obſcurity which has perplexed expoſitors in giving an account of St. Paul's argument here, have ariſen from their miſtaking the

the meaning of theſe words, ατινα εστιν αλληγορουμενα; which ſhould not have been rendered, *which things* ARE AN ALLEGORY, but *are allegorized i. e.* not by St. Paul, but by the prophet Iſaiah, whoſe allegory St. Paul refers to, and expreſsly quotes in the following 27th verſe; and, in my opinion, Mr. Pierce has ſufficiently juſtified both the prophet in his alluſion, and the apoſtle in the uſe he makes of it with regard to the Jews. But the Diſſertation is too long for me to tranſcribe here, and I will not ſpoil it by an abridgment.

Page 275. The author ſeems to doubt, or really more than doubt, "Whether there be "any poſitive inſtitutions of a divine original "that may be deemed acts of piety. As to "the inſtitutions of Moſes (he ſays) they ſeem "to have been treated diſreſpectfully by two "of Chriſt's apoſtles, St. Peter and St. Paul, "by whom they ſeem to be conſidered as below "and unworthy of the Supreme Deity," &c. Not at all, in my opinion. St. Paul, and, no doubt, St. Peter too, conſidered the Jewiſh nation at the time of giving them the law (and others too, perhaps) as in a ſtate of minority, and proper to be indulged with childiſh things, or weak and beggarly elements, as the apoſtle calls them, by way of compariſon. But now, under the goſpel diſpenſation, they were to put away childiſh things, and be treated and inſtructed in a more *manly* way. And wherein is it below or unworthy of man or of God to treat creatures according to their real ſtate or circumſtances?

"As to the inſtitutions of Chriſt (ſays this author) "they do not appear to be relative to "the Supreme God, but only to the diſciples "of Chriſt and their maſter." How contrary is this ſuggeſtion to the continual expreſs declarations of Chriſt himſelf? John xii. 49. *For I have not ſpoken of myſelf, but the Father, who ſent me, he gave me commandment what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak; my doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me,* chap. vii. 16. See likewiſe chap. xiv. 24. and 31. Thus baptiſm was inſtituted and intended not only (I will add not chiefly) "as a mark or viſible token of "diſcipleſhip, or dedication and attachment to "Chriſt;" but alſo to God the Father through Chriſt. Why elſe are we ordered to be baptized into the name of the Father (in the firſt place, too) as well as into that of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? And the Lord's ſupper ſeems intended, not only "to awaken and keep "alive upon the minds of Chriſt's followers (I add, in the world and throughout all ages) "a juſt and worthy ſenſe of the beautiful cha-"racter of their maſter;" but alſo, and more eſpecially, of God the Father's good-will to mankind, in ſending him to live, and preach, and work miracles, and die, and riſe again, and enſure eternal life to true believers for the promoting of virtue and rational religion in a corrupt world. "To which" (viz. to which inſtitutions) ſays this author, "we may "add the waſhing of feet, which ſeems to bear "ſome reſemblance to a poſitive inſtitution." Slily inſinuating, that there is as much reaſon to obſerve

obſerve this rite or cuſtom in the chriſtian church, as thoſe of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. But did our Saviour ſay, waſh the feet of *all nations*, or ſay, do *this* as oft as ye do it for a memorial of me? or do we find ſuch a practice take riſe immediately from this, and continue amongſt the apoſtles and firſt chriſtians. I am far from looking upon theſe external rites, ſigns or ceremonies, as of equal importance with any moral duty, but as ſubſervient to moral duty, particularly to a religious regard to God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent, and to his promiſe of eternal life, and the obſerving them with this view and to this purpoſe, his paying obeiſance to God, or worſhipping of him.

This author queſtions whether *prayer* is a part of *natural religion*, and ſeems to think, the begging his bleſſing upon our food, or any other petition to God Almighty, a groundleſs and impertinent, if not an abſurd practice.

There is, I think, in nature, this perpetual ground for prayer, viz. our own inſufficiency, for any thing without the continual, though ever ſo imperceptible interpoſition of that Great Being, in whom we live and move and have our being; and prayer to God is a very natural and becoming acknowledgment, of this our dependance upon him. If prayer to a ſuperior being, be not natural to man, whence is it the practice of all men, in all parts and all ages of the world, when in any diſtreſſes wherein their own wiſdom and abilities fail them; and the reaſon of the thing is the ſame, where we are not

not driven to theſe extremities, though it may not be apt to act ſo forcibly upon us.

The author's ſyſtem of divinity and of providence, ſeems to be, *that all events take place*, neceſſarily and uninterruptedly, from a ſeries of cauſes, ever ſince the firſt creation of things, and that the Divine Being never interpoſes on any account. If this were, indeed, the certainly known ſtate of the caſe, prayer to God would be a hopeleſs performance; but if the very reverſe of this, which is the ſcripture ſyſtem of providence, be true, prayer to God is as proper and natural, as for a child to aſk bread or help, or any thing it wants of its earthly parents. In each caſe, wiſdom and paternal goodneſs, muſt direct and govern the anſwer to ſuch prayers.

[*To be continued.*]

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS's obſervations on the reaſoning of St. Paul, in your laſt number, throughout the eight firſt pages of them, appear to me very juſt as well as ingenious. I ſhall make no other remark on what follows, than to ſuggeſt in what light thoſe paſſages of ſcripture, he refers to, appear to me.

The moral law makes no proviſion for repentance; it is not in the nature of law to do ſo. That is the buſineſs of ſome act of grace. Accordingly, when our firſt parents had broken the

the poſitive law of God, and Cain the very law of nature, God ſufficiently manifeſted his diſpoſition to be merciful to them, to correct them like a father, and not like an inexorable judge. He raiſed in them the expectation of a ſaviour, who ſhould bruiſe their great enemy the ſerpent's head. He expreſsly aſſured Abraham, that *in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.* The prophet Ezekiel ſolemnly declared in his name, that *the repenting, reformed ſinner ſhould live, and not die.* And the common kind providence of God was ſufficient to leave the heathen world inexcuſable in their impenitency and unbelief, as the apoſtle ſuggeſts. The good perſons, upon record in the Old Teſtament, expected acceptance with God, and ſalvation, on the ſcore of his experienced *mercy*, and (to them) well known *promiſes.* But, the generality of the latter Jews, in the pride and preſumption of their hearts, expected it on account of their obſervance of the mere letter of the law; being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, ſubmitted not to the righteouſneſs of God.

PAULINUS ſeems to think (if I take him right) that Moſes, in Deut. xxx. 10—14. had no reference at all to *juſtification by faith*, but only by his own *law.* I conſider the paſſage thus, *If thou ſhalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and ſtatutes which are written in this book of the law.* (This may, perhaps, imply perfect obedience to the law, in which caſe the law would, undoubtedly, juſtify

juſtify them; but what if they ſhould have tranſgreſſed this law in any inſtances, or their children after them; this Moſes evidently ſuppoſes to be the caſe throughout this whole chapter, and, therefore, adds) *and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul,* this implies *repentance* and *faith* in the mercy of God. *For* (ſays he) *the commandment which I command thee this day,* viz. to repent, and reform, and truſt in God's mercy, *is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off*; it is not a ſecret purpoſe locked up in the breaſt of a merciful God, *that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it; neither is it beyond the ſea,* revealed to ſome favoured nation afar off, *that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go over the ſea to look for it,* in a diſtant country, *and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; but the word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth,* [when thou readeſt the prophecies, the promiſes, or the hiſtory contained in the ſacred books] *and in thy heart,* [when thou giveſt thyſelf leave to think and reaſon fairly on the divine attributes, which both the works and word of God preach to thee.] In the ſame manner as the moral law is ſaid to be written in the heart of the heathens, the goſpel may be ſaid to be written in the heart of the Jews until the veil came upon their heart.

I cannot think St. Paul's application ſo *forced* an accommodation; or that it was in the leaſt ſuggeſted to him by the mention of aſcending up into heaven, or going down into the deep.

By

By *Chriſt's being brought down from above*, or *brought up again from the dead*, St. Paul means the *doctrine* Chriſt taught, and the apoſtles preached; as St. Paul explains both himſelf and Moſes, when he immediately adds, *This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and believe in thy heart that God raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

As to St. Paul's appeal to Habakkuk; render the expreſſion, *The juſt by faith ſhall live*; and the ſenſe of the paſſage will be thus, *His ſoul that is lift up*, (like that of the ſelf-conceited phariſee) *is not upright in him*; but the humble ſoul (who renders himſelf acceptable to God by a religious regard to him, and, together with his ſincere perſevering obedience, cries out, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*, ſhall be juſtified, he) *ſhall live.* He ſhall eſcape the judgment threatened.

With regard to Heb. x. 5—10. I refer PAULINUS to Mr. JAMES PIERCE's Criticiſm on that place; who ſuſpected a very ſmall alteration had crept into the Hebrew text by the miſtake of ſome tranſcriber, and that both the Hebrew and the Septuagint were the ſame, as to that expreſſion in the Pſalm, when that epiſtle was wrote; or a writer to the Hebrews would ſcarce have quoted it to them ſo different from what they muſt read it in their own bibles. But for the ſolution of this, and ſome other difficulties, we muſt wait the reſult of Dr. Kennicot's laborious reſearches.

St. Paul does, indeed, ſometimes make uſe of the terms *fleſh* and *ſpirit* figuratively, to diſtinguiſh

tinguiſh betwixt the *ſpirit* and the *letter* of the *law*; but in the eighth chapter to the Romans throughout, and in the other paſſage PAULINUS quotes, Gal. v. 13. to the end of the chapter, he evidently makes uſe of theſe terms only in the literal ſenſe, to denote the propenſities of the fleſh, or animal part; and the dictates of the rational part in the human compoſition, and why may not theſe terms be uſed in theſe different ſenſes on different occaſions, where common ſenſe may ſufficiently determine their true meanings, as well as the word *leaven* ſometimes to ſignify *bread*, ſometimes *falſe doctrine*, ſometimes *immorality?* Theſe liberties of expreſſion were too familiar in thoſe times and countries to build any objection upon.

St. Paul's argument againſt licentiouſneſs, appears to me very juſt, and very ſtrong, however he may be thought to have taken an orator's liberty in illuſtrating it. The whole *argument* is compriſed in that ſhort queſtion, *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?* The profeſſion of chriſtianity is a renouncing the allowed practice of ſin, or dying to it. Chriſt's baptiſm, as well as John's, was baptiſm unto *repentance*. And what is this but dying unto ſin that we may live unto righteouſneſs? Our Saviour devoted himſelf by his *baptiſm* both by *water* and by *blood*, to this purpoſe, this great and kind deſign, though himſelf knew no ſin, but (to uſe a ſcripture expreſſion) left it off before it was meddled with. He was lifted up upon the croſs that he might draw all men unto him from the paths of vice, and roſe again from the dead

dead to aſſure them of the pardon of paſt tranſgreſſions, and a reſurrection to eternal life. St. Paul had as great a zeal for *morality* as any man could have, and not at all the leſs for his reckoning himſelf not under the law, (*i. e.* the curſe or condemning power of the law) but under grace.

There is one paſſage which may ſerve to ſhew us with what latitude the ſacred writers ſometimes made uſe of the word *propheſy*, John xi. 49—51. *And one of them*, Caiaphas, *being the High Prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor conſider that it is expedient for us that one man ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation periſh not; and this ſpake he, not of himſelf, but being High Prieſt that year, he* propheſied *that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation, &c.* i. e. *in effect propheſied*; for Caiaphas had no notion of Chriſt's dying for that nation any otherwiſe, than to prevent the Romans from taking umbrage at his pretenſions to be the Meſſiah, and making war with that nation for eſpouſing or conniving at ſuch pretenſions; but he was influenced by a ſuperior power to expreſs his own wicked meaning in this remarkable manner, which might be conſidered as *prophetic* of the real truth, and of the gracious purpoſe of God in favour, not of that nation only, but of all the children of God who were ſcattered abroad.

Theſe thoughts (ſuch as they are concerning the argument objected to, are freely ſubmitted to your better judgment, by Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

THE remarks I now ſend you on the writings of St. Paul are of a miſcellaneous nature, and they compriſe all that I ſhall think it worth while to trouble you, or the public with, upon this ſubject.

Several of the proofs which St. Paul brings of the dignity of Chriſt from the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, do not appear to me to be quite ſatisfactory. Of this number are the following, ſelected from many others that are more to the purpoſe, in the epiſtle to the Hebrews; where he begins with undertaking to prove the dignity of Chriſt from the high titles given to him, and the high things ſpoken of him in the ſcriptures.

Heb. i. 5. *I will be to him a father, and he ſhall be to me a ſon*; which is taken either from Pſal. lxxxix. 26, 27. or 1 Chron xxii. 11. or 2 Sam. vii. 14. In all which places the words ſeem to relate only to David or Solomon.

Heb. i. 6. *And let all the angels of God worſhip him*, from Pſal. xcvii. 7. likewiſe, Heb. i. 10—12. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt: And they ſhall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail*; quoted from Pſal. cii. 25—27. Both theſe paſſages ſeem to

to me to relate to no other than the great Jehovah, God the Father himſelf.

If St. Paul (or whoever elſe was the author of this epiſtle) did not mean to apply this paſſage to the ſon (which, indeed, is hardly credible, conſidering the many clear proofs there are of his ſuppoſing Chriſt to be not God, but a man *in all things* like ourſelves) I cannot help thinking the application of it to be rather awkward and ill-judged. But I am very willing to receive information on this ſubject.

That the Gentiles were to be invited to partake of the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom, or to have the glad tidings of the goſpel preached to them, was moſt certainly agreeable to the purpoſe of the Univerſal Father of the human race; and what he had frequently, and expreſsly ſignified, by his prophets of old. Many of theſe teſtimonies are, with great force and propriety, alledged by the apoſtles againſt the cavils of the Jews; who were deſirous to engroſs to themſelves all the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom. But St. Paul aims at a redundancy of argument, and the following ſeems to be an inſtance of it.

In the tenth chapter of his epiſtle to the Romans he is proving, that there was ſufficient intimation given in the ſcriptures of the intended converſion of the Gentiles; and he quotes two paſſages to make good his aſſertion. One of them is from Moſes, and the other from Iſaiah. That from Iſaiah is full to his purpoſe; but that from Moſes is not ſo ſatisfactory.

Rom. x. 19. *But I ſay, did not Iſrael know* [that the Gentiles were to be converted and ſaved] *Firſt, Moſes ſaith, I will provoke them to jealouſy by them that are no people, and by a fooliſh nation I will anger you.*

It is evident, that theſe words have nothing in them that, at firſt ſight, looks like any prediction, or even an intimation, that the Gentiles were to be received into the church or family of God as well as the Jews; and when we have recourſe to the original, and conſider the connection in which the words ſtand, they appear ſtill leſs to admit of ſuch a conſtruction. The paſſage is taken from a ſong that Moſes compoſed, on purpoſe to be committed to memory by the children of Iſrael; and the part that St. Paul quotes from it, to all appearance, contains nothing more than a threatning from God, to puniſh and afflict them for their contempt of him, by means of a weak and contemptible enemy.

Deut. xxxii. 21. *They have moved me to jealouſy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: And I will move them to jealouſy with thoſe which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a fooliſh nation.*

That this wholly relates to their being delivered into the hands of their enemies, is evident from what follows preſently after, v. 30. *How ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight; except their Rock had ſold them, and the Lord had ſhut them up?*

If

If any thing in the conduct of our modern commentators could ſurprize me, it would be, to find them ſo confidently to maintain, that the Divine Being is, in this place, really threatning the children of Iſrael with the call and converſion of the Gentiles, as a great affliction and calamity, that was to befall them, and a puniſhment for their idolatry and apoſtacy; when this very ſame thing is promiſed to Abraham, under the notion of a bleſſing. *In thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.* That the ſame event ſhould be both *a bleſſing*, and *a curſe*, to the ſame people; that in the very ſame manner, God ſhould promiſe to reward the obedience of Abraham, and threaten to puniſh the diſobedience of his degenerate children, is ſomething extraordinary.

To lay any ſtreſs, as Dr. Taylor I think doth, upon the original word in the Hebrew [קנא] as if it denoted only *jealouſy on account of another's advancement to honours and privileges, that we think we alone have a right to*, is frivolous; when the primary, and genuine ſenſe of the Hebrew is acknowledged to be nothing more than *to be inflamed*, to be *red hot*; and to be applied to *any warm violent affection of the mind, either for, or againſt any one.* See Dr. Taylor's Hebrew Concordance. And when, by the very diſpoſition of the words, in both clauſes of the ſentence, *moving to jealouſy*, and *provoking to anger*, are made perfectly ſynonimous.

If we look a little farther into the ſame epiſtle, we ſhall find, that St. Paul really laid conſiderable ſtreſs upon the literal interpretation of this

paſſage in Moſes; for he ſeems to have borrowed from it the hints he gives us of the manner in which, he apprehended, that the converſion of the Gentiles would make way for that of the Jews. This great event, he ſeems to think, will be brought about by the Jews being fired with jealouſy and emulation, upon ſeeing the Gentiles in poſſeſſion of the privilege of being the peculiar people of God, when themſelves were caſt off; which would be a ſtronger motive, than any that the Jews yet had, to embrace chriſtianity.

That this is a juſt repreſentation of his ſentiments, and of his apprehenſions of the views of Divine Providence, firſt, in the partial converſion of the Jews, as introductory to the general converſion of the Gentiles; and then, of this as an event introductory to the like general converſion of the Jews, the bare peruſal of the following paſſages will prove; and the noble exclamation upon the wiſdom and myſtery of Providence, with which he cloſes the argument, ſeems to have broken from him, upon this view of the reaſons and methods of it.

Rom. xi. 7—11. *What then, Iſrael hath not obtained what he ſeeketh for; but the elect have obtained it, and the reſt were blinded: According as it is written, God hath given them a ſpirit of ſlumbering, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear, unto this day. And David ſaith, Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence unto them. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not ſee, and bow down their back always. I ſay, then, have they ſtumbled, that they ſhould fall? God forbid!*

but

but rather, through their fall, ſalvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [the Jews] *to jealouſy.*—V. 25, 26. *For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits, that blindneſs in part hath happened unto Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in; and ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved.*—V. 28. *Concerning the Gentiles, they are enemies for your ſake.*—V. 30—33. *For as ye in times paſt have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy, through their unbelief: Even ſo have theſe alſo now not believed, that, through your mercy, they alſo may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom, and the knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! &c.*

Theſe ſame views the apoſtle himſelf ſeems to endeavour to enter into; no doubt, from his apprehenſion that they were the views of Providence. For one reaſon that he aſſigns, why he exerted himſelf ſo much to propagate chriſtianity among the Gentiles, is, that the Jews, his countrymen, might thereby by provoked to jealouſy, and (not to be behindhand with the Gentiles) embrace chriſtianity themſelves. But, if we conſult the hiſtory of thoſe times, we ſhall find, that no circumſtance in the conduct of the apoſtles gave the Jews ſo great offence, and filled them with ſtronger prejudice againſt the goſpel, as their preaching it to the Gentiles. See the apoſtle's views in the following paſſage:

Rom. xi. 13, 14. *I ſpeak to you Gentiles, inaſmuch as I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them.*

St. Paul ſeems to have been a little off his guard when he ſaid, Heb. ix. 22. that *without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion.* For, in the Old Teſtament, and even in the books of Moſes themſelves, we frequently read of *ſins being forgiven,* and even of *atonement* being made, where there was no blood ſhed, or required. See Repoſitory, Vol. I. p. 201, 202.

In Pſalm viii. 3—8. St. Paul meets with this paſſage, *When I conſider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the ſun, moon and ſtars, which thou haſt ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him? For thou haſt made him a little lower than the angels, and haſt crowned him with glory and honour: Thou madeſt him to have dominion over all the works of thine hands: Thou haſt put all things under his feet: All ſheep and oxen, yea and the beaſts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea; and whatſoever paſſeth through the paths of the ſeas.*

This is an exceeding fine paſſage. The ſentiment is perfectly natural and juſt, and the expreſſion proper to it. In it the race of mankind appears in a very juſt and beautiful light. In one view, we ſee man's inferiority to the Supreme Being, to the angels, and to the ſun, moon and ſtars, the more magnificent, and glorious works of God's hand; and, in another view, his ſuperiority

rity to the animal creation; conſiſting of beaſts, birds, and fiſhes, which are all diſtinctly enumerated. I can ſee no foundation for interpreting this concerning Chriſt, but that the term *ſon of man* occurs in it, nor as concerning the diſpenſation of the goſpel being committed to him, but that *all things* are here ſaid to be put under his feet; though what is included in *all* is particularly ſpecified. The turn which the apoſtle gives to the paſſage is as follows:

Heb. ii. 5—9. *For unto angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak. But one, in a certain place, teſtified, ſaying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him? Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels: Thou crownedſt him with glory and honour; and didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands. Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For, in that he hath put all things in ſubjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we ſee, not yet all things put under him: But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſufferings of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, ſhould taſte death for every man.*

In the ſixty-eighth pſalm, David gives a noble, animated, and highly figurative deſcription of the conqueſts of the Almighty over his own and his church's enemies. That the conqueror in the pſalm is no other than the great Jehovah himſelf, ſeems to be evident from the general tenor of the pſalm; though I am not clear that ſome part of it doth not refer to the kingdom of the Meſſiah in the latter days. However I can-

not think, with St. Paul, that it muſt neceſſarily refer to Chriſt, becauſe mention is made in it of *one that aſcended.* That the reader may judge for himſelf, I ſhall firſt quote the words of the pſalm, and then St. Paul's comment upon it.

Pſal. lxviii. 1. *Let God ariſe, let his enemies be ſcattered; let them alſo that hate him flee before him.* V. 4. *Sing unto God, ſing praiſes to his name: Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.* V. 11, 12. *The Lord gave the word, great was the company of thoſe that publiſhed it. Kings of armies did flee apace, and ſhe that tarried at home divided the ſpoil.* V. 17—19. *The chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of angels: The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou haſt aſcended up on high: Thou haſt led captivity captive: Thou haſt received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Bleſſed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our ſalvation.*

Eph. iv. 8—12. *Wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt, into the lower parts of the earth? He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended up, far above all heavens; that he might fill all things. And he gave ſome apoſtles, and ſome prophets, and ſome evangeliſts, and ſome paſtors and teachers; for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, &c.*

St. Paul having aſſerted, Heb. ii. 11. that *he that ſanctifieth* [i. e. Chriſt] *and they who are ſanctified*

tified are all of one, quotes the following paſſages from the Old Teſtament in ſupport of it, v. 12. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the congregation I will ſing praiſes unto thee*; taken from Pſal. xxii. 22.. which relates probably to the Pſalmiſt himſelf; and v. 13. *Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me*; which is only a part of a ſentence, from Iſa. viii. 18. in which the prophet is ſpeaking only of himſelf and his own children, whom he there ſaith that God made uſe of for ſigns to the children of Iſrael.

St. Paul attempts to prove, that *there yet remains a reſt for the people of God,* for us who believe the goſpel to enter into. His final argument for this, and that which he lays the greateſt ſtreſs upon is, that David, a long time after the reſt given to the children of Iſrael by Joſhua, ſpeaketh of a reſt for the people of God. This reſt, St. Paul ſaith, cannot yet have been entered into, but ſtill remains to be enjoyed.

Heb. iv. 7—9. *Again he limiteth a certain day, ſaying in David, To-day, after ſo long a time; as it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jeſus* [Joſhua] *had given them reſt, then would he not afterwards have ſpoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a reſt to the people of God.*

I ſhall now quote the original paſſage from David.

Pſal. xcv. 7—11. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs;*

when

when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and ſaid, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways; unto whom I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not enter in my reſt.

What *reſt* can it be David refers to in this place, but the very reſt that Joſhua gave the children of Iſrael? For he is profeſſedly warning his own age by the example of paſt times.

Laſtly; That the ladies are very well ſatisfied with the place St. Paul hath aſſigned them in the church, I have too high an opinion of their modeſty and diſcretion, to diſpute. But I appeal to their judgment, whether it be a ſufficient reaſon for his peremptorily confining them to the place of hearers and learners, that Adam was firſt formed, and that Eve firſt tranſgreſſed.

1 Tim. ii. 12—14. *But I ſuffer not a woman to ſpeak, or to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence: For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve: And Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the tranſgreſſion.*

To the account that I have given of the reaſoning of St. Paul, it may not be foreign to the purpoſe, to add a ſelect number of the boldeſt figures, alluſions, and allegories, which he hath introduced in his writings. For, ſince reaſoning is conducted by an attention to the *real* and ſtrict analogies of things, juſt as figures of ſpeech are formed upon the moſt beautiful and ſtriking, though looſer analogies; with reſpect to which, however, rules of propriety and correctneſs are obſerved by judicious writers, and a negligence

a negligence in the one caſe is generally attended with a like negligence in the other; the liberties that a man gives himſelf, even with reſpect to his figures and alluſions, may contribute ſomething towards giving us an inſight into his character as a reaſoner; and help to determine, whether he muſt be deemed a *cautious*, or a *bold*, a *clear*, or a *confuſed*, reaſoner; according as he is obſerved to be *cautious* or *bold*, *clear* or *confuſed*, in his figures and alluſions. And when, by attending to thoſe characteriſtic circumſtances, we are agreed in what claſs to rank a writer, we may better judge how far, and wherein, he may be depended upon, and in what he cannot be depended upon by us.

And this method is the more neceſſary to be taken with St. Paul, as it is almoſt peculiar to him, to have his arguments, alluſions, and figures of ſpeech ſlide inſenſibly into one another: So that, in ſome places, it may very well admit of a diſpute, whether he really means to argue ſeriouſly, and demonſtrate upon ſolid principles, or only to draw out a figure, and purſue an allegory, or alluſion. This is exactly in the *Jewiſh taſte:* And whether or no, St. Paul's undoubted good ſenſe was ſatisfied with it, it anſwered his purpoſe the beſt of any method in the world. *To the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews.*

Of this mixture of reaſoning and figures, is one of the methods by which St. Paul ſeems to have endeavoured to bring over the Jews to the profeſſion of chriſtianity, when he ſuppoſes a contract of marriage to have paſſed between them:

them: For he would prevail upon them to forſake the law, by demonſtrating to them, that this contract was broken, and therefore, that they were entirely at liberty to diſpoſe of themſelves to another.

Rom. vii. 1—6. *Know ye not, brethren, (for I ſpeak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man ſo long as he liveth. For the woman who hath an huſband is bound by the law to her huſband, ſo long as he liveth; but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of her huſband. So then, if, while her huſband liveth, ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs; but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is free from that law; ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man: Wherefore, my brethren, ye now are become dead to the law, by the body of Chriſt; that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter.*

If we aſk, in what ſenſe and manner it is, that the Jews might be ſaid to die to the law? *What is it in them that dies?* We are told, it is that *body of ſin*, from which the apoſtle, in the ſixth and twenty-fourth verſes of this chapter, mentions his being delivered. If we aſk farther, By what means we come to be delivered from this body of ſin? What is it that kills it within us? We have

have the apoſtle's explanation of this particular in the fourth verſe, in which he ſaith, *We are become dead to the law, by the body of Chriſt*; and in the ſixth verſe of the preceding chapter, in which he repreſents *the old man* within us as *crucified with Chriſt*; that is, it dies in the ſimilitude of the death of the body of Chriſt. And now *this body of ſin being* in this manner *dead, by which*, as he ſaith, v. 6. that *we were held* [*i. e.* in contract with the law] the bond of the contract is diſſolved, and though the law be ſuppoſed to be ſtill in being, it hath no power over us, or claim upon us, and we are under no ſort of obligation to it.

The ſtruggle which St. Paul deſcribes as ſubſiſting within himſelf, in the remaining part of this chapter, which hath been the ſubject of ſo much debate among the commentators, appears to me to be an attempt to demonſtrate, by an appeal to our experience and internal feelings, the real exiſtence of this *body of ſin*, by means of which the Jews were bound to the law, and which dies in the death of Chriſt, as ſomething that may be conſidered as different, and diſtinct, from *ourſelves*, our better mind. In this ſeeming weakneſs of St. Paul's reaſoning, we may clearly diſcern a piece of his fine addreſs to the Jews, in chuſing to repreſent them as dead to the law, rather than ſuppoſe the law to be, in any ſenſe, dead to them; which, he was ſenſible, would have been an inſurmountable offence to thoſe brethren of his: though, certainly, his argument would have appeared to much more advantage, upon that ſuppoſition, than as it

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ſtands at preſent. But St. Paul choſe rather to clog and embarraſs his argument with unneceſſary difficulties, than to offend the Jews in ſo tender a point. Beſides, he was ſo well acquainted with the temper and diſpoſition of the Jews, as to know, that a weak and perplexed argument, delivered in an inoffenſive manner, would go farther with them, than the moſt clear and ſubſtantial, that the caſe would admit of, delivered with offence.

In the ſixteenth chapter of the book of Geneſis, we find the ſtory of Abraham's going in to Hagar his handmaid, when he deſpaired of having iſſue by Sarah his lawful wife, according to the received cuſtom of thoſe times. But Hagar and her ſon Iſhmael growing inſolent, at the inſtances of Sarah, enforced by a divine command, they are caſt out. This ſtory St. Paul allegorizes, giving it ſuch a turn as is rather unfavourable to the law, and in favour of the goſpel. I call it an *allegory*, becauſe St. Paul himſelf calls it ſo, and becauſe this application of the ſtory is ſo arbitrary. Notwithſtanding this, however, if the connection it ſtands in be conſulted, it will appear that St. Paul lays no ſmall ſtreſs upon it, and that he really intended it to have ſome conſiderable weight with the Judaizing chriſtians, to whom it is addreſſed.

By the child which Hagar the bond-woman bare to Abraham, St. Paul would have us to underſtand the covenant that was made with the children of Iſrael at Mount Sinai; which anſwers to Jeruſalem, and the Jews in their ſtate of bondage to the law; whereas the goſpel covenant

venant is typified by Iſaac the ſon of the free woman. We *chriſtians*, therefore, are repreſented by the ſon of the *free-woman*; while the *Jews* are only the children of the *bond-woman*. And thus the hiſtory is inverted by the allegory.

Gal. iv. 21—31. *Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law. For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was after the fleſh, but he of the free-woman was by promiſe. Which things are an allegory. For theſe are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar: For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children: But Jeruſalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice thou barren, that beareſt not: Break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: For the deſolate ſhall have more children than ſhe who hath an huſband. Now we brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of the promiſe. But as then, he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now. Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcriptures? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free.*

St. Paul's exceſſive fondneſs for types and allegories makes him convert almoſt every circumſtance, relating to the paſſage of the children of Iſrael through the wilderneſs, into allego-

ries.

ries. Moſt of them are exceeding beautiful, and are not in the leaſt offenſive to thoſe that are converſant with his writings.

In the following paſſage, we have two of theſe circumſtances allegorized. The children of Iſrael, under the conduct of Moſes, paſs through the Red Sea, and under the cover of a ſupernatural cloud. This is the naked fact. Dreſſed in allegory, this is *baptizing them to Moſes*, both *in the cloud*, and *in the ſea*.

Again; Moſes, we read, ſtruck a rock, and the water guſhed out, and might follow the camp for ſome time. But in St. Paul the water is ſpiritual water, and the rock becomes a *ſpiritual rock*. It even follows the camp, and, at laſt, appears to be no other than *Chriſt* himſelf.

1 Cor. x. 1—4. *Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea; and were all baptized unto Moſes, in the cloud, and in the ſea; and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink: for they all drank of that ſpiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Chriſt.*

In the thirty-fourth chapter of the book of Exodus, we read, that, when Moſes deſcended from the mount, after converſing with God, his face ſhone with ſo intenſe a brightneſs, that he was obliged to cover it with a veil; or the people could not have looked upon him to converſe with him.

With St. Paul this veil is a myſtical covering for the heart; and prevents the Jews from ſee-

ing

ing to the end, and comprehending the deſign of their religious inſtitution.

2 Cor. iii. 13—16. *And not as Moſes, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Iſrael could not ſteadfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed; but their minds were blinded. For, until this day, remaineth the ſame veil untaken away, in reading the Old Teſtament; which veil is done away in Chriſt. But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the veil is upon their heart; nevertheleſs, when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the veil ſhall be taken away.*

In the following paſſage, St. Paul appears to me to give no very clear account of the nature and efficacy of mental prayer. He repreſents the ſpirit of God as praying within us, in conjunction with our groanings; and ſaith, that God, who knows the mind of the ſpirit, receives his interceſſion favourably. So that it is not we that pray, but another within us, and for us.

Rom. viii. 26, 27. *Likewiſe the ſpirit, alſo, helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the ſpirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that ſearcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the ſpirit; for he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints, according to the will of God.*

To illuſtrate, if not to prove, that all chriſtians are the ſons of God, as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was; and, therefore, that they have a right to all the privileges of ſons, St. Paul repreſents them as having *put on Chriſt*, in ſuch

a manner as to be entirely covered with him, as a man is covered with the clothes he puts on; ſo as that, to God, they appear nothing but Chriſt, his own individual beloved ſon. This, at leaſt, is Mr. Locke's ſenſe of the following paſſage.

Gal. iii. 26—28. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; but we are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Chriſt and his death are repreſented by a great variety of figures, alluſions and compariſons, in St. Paul's writings. In one place, he is *the paſchal lamb*, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us.* In another place, he is *a ſacrifice for ſin.* Eph. v. 2. *Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God of a ſweet ſwelling ſavour.* Preſently after, we find him *the prieſt*, that officiates upon the occaſion. Heb. ix. 11. *But Chriſt, being come a high prieſt of good things to come.* And, laſt of all, which is inconſiſtent with his being either prieſt, or ſacrifice, he is devoted to be *a curſe*, and to die an accurſed death. Gal. iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

With reſpect to this variety of alluſions or compariſons, St. Paul can hardly be conſidered as entirely free from blame. He hath had too little regard to the conſiſtency of theſe repreſentations, though they are uſed in very diſtant

places

places in his writings. For it is very difficult to conceive, how a number of things, ſo entirely different from, and even contrary to each other, as a *paſchal lamb*, a *ſacrifice for ſin*, a *prieſt*, and a *curſe*, ſhould faithfully and truly repreſent the ſame perſon, in the ſame ſcene of his life, and at the ſame inſtant of time. This proceeding could not but tend to throw confuſion into our views of the end and deſign of the death of Chriſt.

There is ſomething juſt and noble, but ſomething rather ſtrained, in the compariſon which the apoſtle makes between ſeveral circumſtances in the life of Chriſt, and what is experienced by chriſtians. Among theſe are the following:

Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.*

——. vi. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Eph. ii. 5, 6. *Even when we were dead in ſins hath quickened us together with him; and hath raiſed us up together, and hath made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Phil. iii. 10, 11. *That I might know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings; being made conformable unto his death: if, by any means, I might attain to the reſurrection of the dead.*

And, not only do all chriſtians, die and riſe again, in conformity to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt; but they are obliged, likewiſe, to undergo a myſtical *circumciſion*, in alluſion to the circumciſion of Chriſt.

Col. ii. 11—13. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed, with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt. Buried with him in baptiſm; wherein, alſo, ye are riſen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead. And you, being dead in your ſins and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes.*

Having now advanced all that I have to object to the reaſoning of St. Paul, I freely ſubmit what I have written to the teſt of impartial examination.

The paſſages I have criticiſed upon in St. Paul, beſides that they are a very inconſiderable part of his writings, contain all that appears to me to be imperfect in his reaſoning. The bulk of his epiſtles conſiſt of excellent ſentiments, nervous eloquence, ſtriking figures, juſt, and, generally, clear reaſoning. Theſe, I ſhould with pleaſure have expatiated upon; but that it is a province which is already occupied by much abler hands.

However, as uſeful obſervations in aſtronomy are drawn from the pains that ſome people have taken to obſerve the ſpots on the face of the ſun, I am not without hopes, that the pains I have taken, may not be altogether without its uſe.

Such is the diſpoſition of mankind to run into extremes in their opinions, and the hurt they receive thereby; that it cannot but be highly proper, that, while ſome are employed in diſplaying the excellencies of great perſon-

ages

ages or writers, in order to excite our admiration, and engage our imitation; others ſhould be endeavouring to guard us againſt their foibles.

When a writer is never mentioned but to his praiſe, nor criticiſed upon but with a view induſtriouſly to cover his blemiſhes, and diſplay his excellencies; and when different commentators vie with each other, not which ſhall moſt effectually ſerve the cauſe of truth, but which ſhall moſt advance the reputation of their author; it is impoſſible but that a prejudice muſt be generated in his favour. And it is the nature of all prejudice to miſlead us in our judgments of men and things: And there may be caſes, in which a prejudice in favour of a perſon may be even of more dangerous conſequence, with reſpect to truth, than any prejudice that can be raiſed againſt him. As to religion, it may have ſuffered pretty equally by prejudices for, and againſt, names. However, as it hath been ſo great a ſufferer by both, it greatly behoves us, in all caſes in which religion is concerned, as it eminently is in the character of St. Paul, carefully to guard againſt a prejudice of either kind.

If this attempt contribute ever ſo little to moderate any exceſſive prejudice, and to fix the balance of the public judgment of St. Paul a little nearer to the proper equipoiſe; ſhould it weigh, I ſay, ever ſo little, if it be on that ſide, in which it will tend to bring things to a juſter ſtandard than that which paſſes at preſent; ſo that the cauſe of truth be ever ſo little promoted by it, all the end I have in view will be anſwered.

I conceive the greater hopes, that the inquiry I have propoſed into the reaſoning of St. Paul, will not be unwelcome to ſtudents in divinity, as it may aſſiſt us in judging of the *inſpiration* of the apoſtles, &c. and whether they were influenced by it as *writers*, which ſeems to be a great *deſideratum* in theological inquiries. For a queſtion of this nature can only be decided by ſuch *facts* as I have propoſed to our examination.

It will be a ſufficient proof that a perſon underſtands nothing at all of the preſent argument, if he imagine that any eſſential point, either in religion in general, or in chriſtianity in particular, is affected by it. The evidence of chriſtianity reſts upon numberleſs, well atteſted, aſtoniſhing, and uncontrouled miracles; and there is no candid or ſober-thinking perſon, but muſt perceive, that it is very poſſible that the apoſtles, being once fully inſtructed in the principles of chriſtianity, might be left, in general, to take their own meaſures, with reſpect to propagating it in the world; in which caſe they muſt be indulged in following the natural bent of their own minds. Conſequently both in their actions and writings, we may expect to diſcern true human characters, attended with natural human failings, and human exceſſes.

Errors in the *conduct* of the wiſeſt and beſt men with whom the ſcripture hiſtory brings us acquainted, are frequent and notorious. Why then ſhould their inſpiration be ſuppoſed to exempt them from blame, more in their *writings*, than in their *conduct*, when a miſtake in the former caſe

caſe is, to ſay the leaſt, as eaſy to fall into as a miſtake in the latter? And their inſpiration would not anſwer the only valuable end that could be propoſed by it, viz. the preventing men from falling into error, unleſs every tranſlator and tranſcriber had been inſpired alſo. The apoſtles and other writers of the New Teſtament, were ſo circumſtanced that they cannot be ſuppoſed to have fallen into any miſtake of conſequence, and we ought to be thankful that, ſince the reformation, we are in circumſtances to diſcern even theſe ſmall miſtakes, provided we have the judgment and the courage to make uſe of all the lights with which we are furniſhed for that purpoſe.

I beg leave, however, to remind my reader, that I mean not to decide concerning, but only to promote an impartial inquiry into, the reaſoning of St. Paul. Should I, therefore, appear to have miſtaken the ſenſe and views of the apoſtle, in the paſſages that I have remarked upon, and the ſuſpicions I raiſe have no foundation in truth, I am heartily diſpoſed to partake of the unfeigned ſatisfaction, which a proper and juſt vindication will give to all the ſincere friends of this great apoſtle; and, if ſuch a vindication can be procured, ſhall think myſelf amply recompenſed for the trouble I have given myſelf to ſet on foot the examination.

I am very ſenſible, what reſpect is due to writings of ſuch ancient date, to a man of St. Paul's character, ſenſe, learning, and wiſdom; and, likewiſe, how dubious the ſenſe muſt neceſſarily be of letters, written upon occaſions with which we are not perfectly acquainted;

and, conſequently, with what extreme caution, circumſpection, and diffidence one ſhould, after all, venture to paſs any cenſure upon them. But when a perſon pretends not to paſs a deciſive ſentence, but only writes with a view to have a ſubject more thoroughly examined into, all lovers of free inquiry will indulge him in conſiderable liberties. For ſuch perſons well know, that to treat every ſubject with the moſt abſolute freedom, is ever the diſpoſition of all lovers of ſimple truth; and that a mind overawed, in the moment of ſpeculation, with a ſlaviſh reverence for any name whatever, whether among the living or the dead, is not deſtined to ſhake off the ſhackles of prejudice from itſelf, or others. That muſt be the effort of a mind every where daring and intrepid, that turns out of its way for nothing but the irreſiſtible force of conviction and truth.

PAULINUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

If the following ſhort obſervations on eating blood appear worthy of your attention, they are ſubmitted to your diſpoſal, by

Your very humble ſervant,

EUSEBIUS.

1. ABſtinence from eating blood, doth not appear to have derived its origin or obligation from the law of Moſes alone, and, con-

conſequently, to have been only a *ritual* of that law; but to have been required by the precept given to Noah and his poſterity, Gen. ix. 4. *But fleſh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ſhall ye not eat.* It is true, that ſome modern Jews underſtand theſe words, as forbidding only "the eating of a living creature, or any part of "it being yet alive, and, conſequently, the fleſh with the blood in it; but the ancient Jews (as Grotius tells us) underſtood it of eating blood in any form. And that Moſes underſtood this prohibition in the ſame ſenſe, *i. e.* as requiring to ſeparate the blood from the fleſh before the latter was eaten, and not to eat the blood at all, appears from Levit. xvii. 10—14. where, among other things, he ſaith, *Ye ſhall eat the blood of no manner of fleſh; for the life of all fleſh is the blood thereof:* here the ſame reaſon for the prohibition is aſſigned as had been given to Noah and his ſons, only more explicitly. This prohibition, therefore, ſeems to be binding upon all the deſcendants from that patriarch, as long as the reaſon on which it is grounded ſhall laſt, *i. e.* as long as the blood ſhall be the life of the fleſh.

2. Let us attend alſo to the time when this prohibition of eating blood was firſt made, viz. when God made a grant of his other animated creatures to mankind for their food. At the creation God had made a grant of his vegetable works for their food, yet even then he made a reſerve, or exception of one tree, Gen. i. 29. *God ſaid, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing ſeed, which is upon the face of all the earth; and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree,*

yielding

yielding ſeed; to you ſhall it be for meat. Hence we may conclude, that the Antediluvians uſed only vegetable food. If they uſed animal food at all, they took what God had not given them, and therefore they had no right to. But after the flood God enlarged his grant, ſaying, Gen. ix. 3. *Every moving thing that liveth ſhall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things:* but then he adds this prohibition in queſtion, the obſervation whereof would ſerve as a conſtant and perpetual memorial of their obligations to the great Author and Lord of univerſal nature, who had ſupplied their wants ſo bountifully. Thus great princes, when they grant extenſive manors, or other privileges, to any of their ſubjects, by charter or letters patent, do often annex clauſes of reſtriction, or requiſitions of certain inconſiderable dues or ſervices, by way of memorial and acknowledgment of the bounty from which the valuable poſſeſſion was derived. Now as the grantee, who ſhould neglect to obſerve the terms of the charter under which he held, would be adjudged to have forfeited his grant; ſo, certainly, doth the perſon who violates this prohibition, forfeit his right to the uſe of animal food, derived from the preceding divine charter.

3. Let us attend alſo a little more particularly to the reaſon aſſigned for this prohibition. *Fleſh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, &c.* or, in the words of Moſes, in Leviticus, *the life of all fleſh is the blood thereof.* Hence this prohibition ſeems deſigned to impreſs on mankind an high regard for that principle

life

life; to inſpire them with great reverence for God, as the author and diſpoſer of life, and with great caution to preſerve, and not to injure life in themſelves, or other men. It was impoſſible that they could make uſe of animals for food without depriving them of life, and their frequent practice of it would have a tendency to make them careleſs of *life* in general, even in one another; to obviate which ill effect, they are required by the aweful ſanction of divine authority, wholly to abſtain from uſing any of that part of the animals they eat, which conſtant and univerſal obſervation ſhewed them to be the vehicle or ſeat of *life*. And to make this impreſſion ſtill more ſure and deep, and more forcibly to deter them from cruelty and murder, it is added in the words following, v. 5, 6. *Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beaſt will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* Now though the uſe of blood for food may have no intrinſic moral evil in it; yet it ſeems to be taking away a barrier againſt the moſt horrid crimes, which was provided by the wiſdom of God to preſerve men from thoſe temptations which his bounty to them might poſſibly occaſion.

Thus, when Moſes in his law forbids eating blood, he ſeems only to explain and enforce a more ancient divine ſanction. It is true he adds a new argument ſuitable to his own inſtitution, Levit. xvii. 11. *For the life of the fleſh is in the blood,*

blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your ſouls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the ſoul. It is readily allowed that this motive for abſtaining from eating blood, ceaſed with the Jewiſh law and ſacrifices, but that hinders not that the other and more ancient obligations may ſtill hold in force.

4. It is objected againſt the ſuppoſed perpetuity of the obligation of the *apoſtolical decree* prohibiting the eating of blood, that neither Paul, nor any other of the New Teſtament writers, do ever repeat it, or inculcate the obligation of this abſtinence. But this ſeems a proof rather that the Gentile converts readily received, and univerſally obſerved this regulation. And what need was there to repeat and inculcate a rule which nobody diſputed or tranſgreſſed, and which, indeed, there was then no ſtrong temptation to tranſgreſs. But the caſe was far different in relation to abſtaining from eating things offered in ſacrifice to idols, and from fornication. The former ſoon became a public teſt of chriſtianity, by which the followers of the goſpel were diſtinguiſhed and marked out for contempt and perſecution. Motives of ſafety, intereſt and honour, therefore, would powerfully incline weak and irreſolute profeſſors to ſymbolize with their Gentile neighbours in this inſtance; and common practice would concur with carnal affection to entice them to commit fornication. It was therefore highly neceſſary, that the apoſtles and other teachers of Chriſtianity ſhould continually admoniſh and exhort them

them to avoid theſe pollutions. Conſtant experience ſhews us, how eaſy it is to perſuade men to the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs in external obſervances, under the notion of a religious ſanction, in matters where neither intereſt nor paſſion are much concerned, but extremely difficult to keep them ſteady in the practice of other duties, which combat againſt the influence of theſe mighty powers, the world and the fleſh.

5. If this prohibition of eating blood was intended by the apoſtles for a temporary regulation only, in compliance with the prepoſſeſſions of the Jewiſh converts, how comes it, that we not only find no hint of ſuch intention in any part of their writings; but alſo no abolition or relaxation of it, when afterwards ſuch compliance became leſs neceſſary; nor any direction under what circumſtances, or in what manner to relax or aboliſh in future. We know that St. John (who was one of the authors of this decree) ſurvived the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the diſperſion of the Jews by Titus Veſpaſian many years; after which event the Jews became the contempt and reproach of all nations, conſequently their prejudices became much leſs an object of conſideration to the chriſtians; yet we do not find that John ever gave the leaſt hint that the Gentile converts were at all releaſed from the obſervance of this article of diſcipline. Moſt writers agree, that the book of the Revelation was penned ſome years after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. If then the paſſage in it to which ſome have referred, * has really a relation

* See Lardner's Remarks on Ward's Diſſertations.

to

to this apoſtolic decree, Rev. ii. 24. *I will put upon you none other burden*; the exalted Redeemer intimates, that this burden was ſtill upon them, and ſhould continue ſo till he came; ſee the following words.

5. But that the apoſtles never did give to the churches any intimation that this order for abſtaining from eating blood was only a temporary regulation, and, conſequently, that they did not underſtand it ſo themſelves, ſeems plain from the uniform and univerſal practice of both the Eaſtern and Weſtern churches, not only in the apoſtles days, but after them for ſeveral centuries. This is confirmed by the many teſtimonies which Grotius hath collected in his Notes on this decree. Amongſt others, Tertullian, in his Apology, at the beginning of the third century, thus vindicates the chriſtians from the fooliſh charge of drinking human blood in their religious rites, "Bluſh at your miſtake about us "chriſtians, who do not uſe even the blood of "animals for food; and for that reaſon refrain "from things ſtrangled, and that died of themſelves, leſt we ſhould be polluted with the "blood lodged in their veſſels. In ſhort, among "other trials of the chriſtians, you offer them "blood-puddings, as being very ſure, no doubt, "that that is held to be *unlawful* amongſt them, "by which you would make them tranſgreſs. "What an abſurdity then is this, that you "ſhould imagine us to be greedy of human "blood, whom you certainly know to have "an abhorrence of the blood of beaſts." Minucius Felix alſo, about the ſame time, ſays,

"So

"So great a caution have we of human "blood, that we know not what it is to "uſe the blood of beaſts in our food." In one of the apoſtolical canons (a book, which, ſaith Grotius, gives the beſt repreſentation of the manners of the ancient chriſtians) is this rule, "If any biſhop, preſbyter, "or deacon, or, in ſhort, any of the eccleſiaſtic "order, ſhall eat blood, or that which was torn "of beaſts, or died of itſelf, let him be de-"graded; for this the law hath forbidden: but "if he be a layman, let him be expelled." But for a very plentiful atteſtation to the general concurrence of the chriſtian churches in all parts of the world, and down till late ages, in regarding the eating of blood as unlawful; ſee a very learned diſſertation of Curcellæus in his Theological Works, publiſhed by Limborch.

Obſervations on the Evidence for a future State, on the Light of Nature.

THE goſpel is to us of the greateſt importance, in that it reveals to us, in the cleareſt manner, the will of God, and the beſt methods we can purſue to be like him, in whatever can ennoble our natures, eſtabliſh our peace, and increaſe our uſefulneſs. If it anſwers theſe ends, ſurely we ſhall not heſitate to pronounce it a gift of unſpeakable conſequence; and the more ſo, if we conſider the motives with which it

it abounds, to encourage our hopes and animate our ſervice. Its precepts are not only clear in their delivery, and beneficial in their tendency, but they are enforced by every motive that can win upon a generous heart. The promiſes of divine indulgence and compaſſion, of help and ſuccour, are of the moſt ſoothing and engaging nature, to one encompaſſed with difficulties of various kinds, ſubject to all the infirmities of *a frail and feveriſh being*, and above all to thoſe moral weakneſſes and tranſgreſſions to which humanity is incident. To give us the higheſt reliſh poſſible of virtue and her ways, it carries our aſpiring ſouls beyond the contracted views of this mortal ſtate, to that exalted world of ſpirits, where our natures ſhall ſtill be advancing in knowledge and perfection, and be rendered completely happy in the eternal enjoyment of the Deity.

Unaſſiſted reaſon caſts a very glimmering and uncertain light on the doctrine of a future ſtate. It no way contradicts it, to be ſure; but it only renders it *barely probable*. I can ſee its abſolute certainty no way confirmed, but by that *goſpel*, which hath *brought life and immortality to light*. Without it, futurity is wrapped up in impenetrable darkneſs, and our hopes of an exiſtence beyond the grave, are built on hypotheſis and conjecture. The immortality of the ſoul cannot be abſolutely inferred from its immaterial nature alone, without involving ourſelves in a very great difficulty, ariſing from the immortality of the ſouls of brutes, which can be as well evinced, and by the ſame proceſs of reaſoning, as the immateriality of human

human ſpirits. Thoſe powers which conſtitute man a ſubject of moral government, and diſtinguiſh him from mere animal beings, are but ſuitable to that ſtate of exiſtence in which he is here, and are abſolutely neceſſary to enable him to act that ſuperior part on earth, which Providence hath deſtined him. Deprive him of any of thoſe powers, and he would be reduced to a level with the brutes, and conſequently unfit to carry on the neceſſary deſigns of nature, or direct and ſuperintend any of her operations.—I aſk, Hath the Divine Being endowed men with a ſuperfluity of powers, with any that he might as well have been without, and which, properly ſpeaking, are unneceſſary to the ends of his living in this world, ſuppoſing it to be his laſt ſtate of reſidence! What are thoſe powers which he might have ſpared, and which man, if he is not to live hereafter, may be abridged of?—Upon looking diligently into my own breaſt, and conſidering the work I have to do, I cannot diſcern one ſuperfluous gift of heaven. There is an intimate connection between the powers of the mind, and that elevated employment, which man feels himſelf called to *in life*. He ſees that, *ſuch a ſtate*, in which he is placed, requires *ſuch abilities* as heaven hath beſtowed upon him, to qualify him to anſwer the true ends and purpoſes of it. Here is ſuch a mutual dependance between mental perceptions and the objects of ſenſe, that without the one, the other would be fruitleſs, and without the former, the latter would be loſt.—The hopes and wiſhes, the capacities and purſuits of men, are governed by

ſprings, whoſe powers are *indefinite*. And ſo they ſhould be, for the œconomy of human life. If bounds could be fixed to them, the ſpirit of action would be enervated and depreſſed, and we know not what ſtagnation in human affairs might take place. 'Tis impoſſible that all things can be known. Therefore, as long as the mind thinks and thirſts after the knowledge of things, ſo far the proſpects of nature will open on it, to excite purſuit, and give a keener edge to the ſpirit of diſcovery. A future ſtate will, inſtead of ſatisfying the mind, with all the knowledge it wants and aſpires after, continue to enlarge the proſpect, and puſh on the genius of inquiry. The mind, ever learning, will never, *can never* arrive to the period it aims at, and will, through unnumbered ages, find itſelf as uneaſy in not knowing what it wants to know, as when it firſt ſet out in the ſearch of things; and perhaps more uneaſy, if we may judge of the effects that our purſuit of knowledge in a future ſtate will have on us by the influence it hath on us at preſent, and with which the obſervation of the *wiſe man* agrees, viz. *He that increaſeth knowledge increaſeth ſorrow*. When, therefore, the *infinity* of man's capacity, is adduced to prove his immortality in ſome future world, I am ſurprized that the gentlemen who thus argue, do not follow the ſoul to its final abode, and conſider that, according *to the regular courſe* of nature, it cannot be completely ſatisfied there, any more than here, nor is the end it hath in view any more likely to be attained than on earth. The ſoul, boundleſs in its deſires (and, according

according to its very eſſential conſtitution, it muſt be ſo as long as it hath any capacity to think, to hope, and to enjoy at all, even in the ſlighteſt degree, it is capable of increaſing it) I ſay the ſoul, boundleſs in its deſires in time, muſt remain unſatisfied to eternity. No given portion of enjoyment or knowledge can ſatisfy it for ever.

If it ſhould be aſked, Why man, who might live for ever, ſhould not? It may be anſwered by propoſing a ſimilar queſtion; Why man, who might have been higher, is ſo low as he is? Is it ſaid that if man is not made for any future ſtate of being, God hath impoſed on him, by the moſt flattering hopes and expectations? To this it may be replied, that if that ſhould be the caſe, he doth his creature no harm by it. The contrary, on the plan of non-exiſtence after death. I have the pleaſing hope of happineſs hereafter, which being a guard to my virtue, eſtabliſhes my trueſt peace. Should that hope prove groundleſs and deluſory, it will neither pain nor ſhame me in the grave, where forgetfulneſs and inſenſibility ever reign. *Where*, as Solomon ſays, *neither work, nor knowledge, nor device are found.*

But it is too bold an aſſertion to ſay, that the hope of man certainly indicates fortune and eternal enjoyment. Perhaps, if the hope of immortality is traced through its ſeveral windings, and purſued to its original ſource, it may be found to proceed from prepoſſeſſed notions, infuſed by tradition, and nurſed by thoſe deſires of the ſoul, which know no limits. I may hope for a

future ſtate of exiſtence, where I may ſtill be engaged in queſt of thoſe refined pleaſures and improvements to which I aſpire here, but to which annihilation will fix an eternal period. But becauſe I hope and wiſh for it, ſhall I certainly enjoy it? How do I know? What are the grounds of my perſuaſion?

My own internal feelings. But they may be the offspring of fancy, and utterly extravagant. Here is no certain and diſtinct voice that I can hear within me, aſſuring me, without revelation, that I ſhall exiſt for ever.

" What, not the voice of conſcience (it may be aſked) " that voice which alarms or relieves, " condemns or acquits when its laws are obeyed " or violated? Doth not that voice *point out an* " *hereafter, and intimate eternity to men?*" I cannot, I freely confeſs, hear that it certainly doth. I hear it applauding virtue and upbraiding vice. And ſo it ſhould, to guard the boundaries of the one, and reſtrain us from approaching too near the other. Virtue is the ornament of man; his chief ſupport and invaluable defence. With it he is happy in himſelf, and uſeful to others. It is the bond of ſociety, and the guardian of its rights. The world ſmiles beneath its auſpices, it flouriſhes in every thing, beneficial and beautiful as virtue, thrives and communicates its influence to it. Beneath the ravages of vice it mourns. It is vice that makes this moſt deſperate attack upon the peace and intereſts of mankind, it turns our very pleaſures into miſery, it makes the world a ſcene of confuſion and havock, and lays a foundation for all the unnum-

unnumbered evils of life. It is neceſſary, I feel it ſo, that I ſhould have a monitor within, to warn me of it, to guard me againſt its fatal ſnares, and keep me ſteady in virtue's paths, which are pleaſantneſs and peace. Conſcience is not a redundant power, ſuppoſing it relates to no life but the preſent. It is abſolutely needful to ſupport the intereſt and happineſs of mankind here, and we cannot infer from it, and the mode of its operation, that its influence reſpects a future ſtate of being.

But there is one argument yet behind, which is commonly urged as a definite one, and I have never read a diſcourſe on the neceſſity of future retribution without it, viz. "The *ine-* "*qualities* obſervable in the *preſent* allotments of "Providence, and the equity of a future ſtate. "To unravel the unknown deſigns of God from "all their perplexing convolutions and intrica-"cies." That is, in other words, the God of infinite wiſdom cannot be thought to act a juſt part by his creatures, unleſs he explains to them all the modes, and opens the genuine reaſons of his conduct, in the government of them; I am afraid ſuch kind of reaſoning would lead us to conſequences which we ſhould tremble to think on.

The more we view the ſtate of things in *general*, the more ſhall we be convinced of the goodneſs and wiſdom of the Deity in the conſtitution of the univerſe, and the exact adjuſtment of one thing to another, through all the ranks and orders of beings. The *whole* feels this uninterruptedly, though particulars may not perceive it, or be able to comprehend the infinite variety of meaſures, by which an omniſcient

and all-powerful being is perpetually promoting it. The *inequalities* of Providence, ſo much inſiſted on by ſome, are evils merely *imaginary*, and not real. They are certainly *neceſſary* for the order and harmony of the particular ſyſtem to which we belong, and for the univerſe in general. We ſee an uniform gradation in the orders of beings inanimate, animate, and rational.

Some are, and muſt be, greater than the reſt. For want of attending properly to this, many are led to entertain very wrong ſentiments of the conduct of Providence, in its preſent allotments; and the arguments which they would infer from them, to evince the *neceſſity* of a future ſtate, reflect the greateſt diſhonour on the Divine Being, who is the God of the preſent as well as the future. Where the nature of man is rationally conſidered, and compared with his ſituation in this life, it is certain that nothing appears to contradict his exiſtence in an immortal ſtate. Nay, many things appear to render it *ſuppoſeable:* but I can diſcover no principle that leads to an undoubted concluſion of the *certainty* of it. Declamations on the hard fate of virtue, and the proſperity of vice in the preſent ſtate, generally prove *too much*, and when urged to prove the neceſſity of a future ſtate, in my opinion, prove nothing at all.

All things come alike to all, ſays Solomon. *There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* I cannot ſee but that the gifts of Providence are *indiſcriminately* divided amongſt mankind. The virtuous part of the world have their ſhares, as much

much as may ſuffice, with the reſt of their fellow-creatures. And, with reſpect to outward calamities, the virtuous and vicious are alike expoſed to them. They are not the peculiar and diſtinguiſhed lot of the righteous. Nay, their characters defend them from a variety of miſeries, which add to the catalogue of human evils, to which the wicked are naturally expoſed. Debaucheries and licentious courſes, to which the virtuous ſtand aloof, entail on the wicked a load of infirmities, and cauſe them to drag a loathſome and cumbrous carcaſe to the grave. Diſhoneſt proceedings meet with deſerved infamy and contempt, and ſuch retaliations as the particular aggravations of their guilt deſerve, impriſonment, exile, or death. Every vicious and erroneous character carries its own odium with it, and it will not want to be chaſtiſed. Vice is its *own* tormenter. The bad man is ever naked to that ſevere laſh it carries with it. His reflections create conſtant uneaſineſs, feed his fear, and caſt a dark ſhade over his ſoul. He recoils when he thinks of *himſelf*. He is aſhamed of *others*, whilſt conſcious of his guilt. In ſhort, as the ſcripture beautifully expreſſes the ſtate of a mind condemned by its own reflections, *the wicked are like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt, but continually caſt up mire and dirt*. On the contrary, the good man is ſatisfied from himſelf. A ſenſe of his integrity is a ſpring of the greateſt conſolation. Reflection is his relief under every preſſure. He hath no evil to fear, for he hath done nothing to merit it. Juſt to mankind, he expects protection. Good to all, he deſerves

eſteem. In whatever ſtation Providence hath placed him, he endeavours to act correſpondent with his duty in it; and whilſt that is the caſe, his conduct cannot but be praiſed, even by thoſe who are not ſo much concerned to be upright. A character ſupported by an uniform ſpirit of piety and virtue, can no more fail of gaining the general eſteem and applauſe of mankind, than the oppoſite character of gaining its due reward of ſhame, ignominy and contempt. The weapons which Providence hath put into our hands, to puniſh the flagitious, and which, with minds of any feeling or ingenuity, will have more influence than any corporal puniſhments or mulcts could poſſibly have without them.

It is really curious to ſee, how learned and ſenſible men will ſhift arguments, and turn the tables, to ſupport a ſyſtem, whoſe particular parts, when ſeparately viewed, do not agree. The divine who one Sunday is preaching on *Wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths peace*, ſhall bring in every witneſs to atteſt the excellence of virtue, and every colour to enhance its beauty. He will conſider its *intrinſic fitneſs*, and its admirable tendency to promote our temporal and ſpiritual intereſt; and its congruity when viewed and compared with our intellectual powers, and its advantages to us, conſidered as connected with a ſyſtem of moral agents, of which virtue is the baſis and ſupport. He will contraſt it with vice, to mark its ſuperiority in point of every thing that rational creatures have cauſe to eſteem valuable. He will declaim loudly and bitterly on the in-

trinſic

trinſic turpitude of vice, its unfitneſs and infamy. He will ſpeak of the miſeries it entails on its votaries here, as well as the more awful ones to which it expoſes them hereafter. From all theſe fine arguments, our preacher will think his doctrine ſufficiently proved; and if you ſhould deny, that *virtue is its own reward*, and that *the good man is the only truly happy man*, he would tell you, that if you had the good man's heart, and knew the ſincere practice of virtue, you would no longer call it in queſtion.

So far it is very well, and quite conſiſtent. But on the following Sunday, having choſen the words of St. Paul; *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all others moſt miſerable*; the preacher finds it quite neceſſary to proceed upon *a different* plan of argument. Now virtue is changed from its ſweet and eaſy appearance, where peace entwined its brows, and love ſat ſmiling on her countenance; diveſted of every beauty to captivate the heart, and every treaſure to enrich it, and reduced to a ſtate of the moſt abject meanneſs; a diſconſolate matron, inſulted in her very tears, her harp hung upon the willows, muttering her complaints to the hollow winds, re-echoed by the pendant walls of ſome ruined temple. Vice exults in the countenance it meets with from the world. All temporal pleaſures and advantages lie on its ſide. And all this to prove that, ſince (for thus it ought to ſtand) the virtuous character is naturally the moſt miſerable and deſpiſed, and the vicious the moſt happy and reſpectable character on earth, it follows, that a future tribunal muſt decide

decide the real difference, and transfer the honour and happineſs where it is due.—In other words, as the one had its hell and the other its heaven here, without the merit of this, or the demerit of that, only through the unequal dealings of God, it is highly neceſſary that, in order to vindicate the conduct of his providence, he ſhould, in a future ſtate, aſſign to each, with more impartiality, the allotments that are reſpectively their due.

I think I have not ſtated the propoſitions unfairly, or drawn a falſe inference from them. I was naturally led to theſe reflections (which may ſeem too bold and ſevere) by thoſe very ſtrange and abſurd methods, that moſt divines take to prove the neceſſity of a future ſtate from the light of nature, without revelation. I firmly believe that doctrine they ſo warmly defend; but a friend to free examination, and willing to explore the principles on which tenets are founded, I confeſs I cannot ſee that a future ſtate is a doctrine dictated and confirmed by reaſon alone. The goſpel only draws open the ſcenes that naturally hide futurity from our view, darts its light beyond the confines of mortality, and directs our eye to immortal objects, to the ſtate of everlaſting bliſs and growing perfection, the world of peace and knowledge, purity and love to God, the cauſe and guide and eternal end of all; to whom may all beings pay their united homage. *Amen.*

PACIFICUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

As you have requeſted your correſpondents to conſider the ſubject of Baptiſm, I ſend you ſome obſervations which have occurred to me reſpecting it. If you think they will throw any light upon the inſtitution, you will, I doubt not, lay them before your readers.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble ſervant,

LIBERIUS.

IT appears to me, that few perſons in theſe weſtern parts of the world, enter ſufficiently into the ideas of the Jews, and other Aſiatic nations; and that ſome objections to infant baptiſm cannot be ſatisfactorily anſwered without laying aſide ſome notions that are, in a manner peculiar to Europeans, and eſpecially ſuch as have prevailed in modern times. With reſpect to this ſubject, I cannot think that writers have attended ſo much as they ought to have done to the power of a maſter of a family in the eaſt, and particularly how far his own character and profeſſion uſually affected his wife, children, and ſervants, and, indeed, every thing that belonged to him. When the Ninevites repented, they made their cattle to faſt, and wear ſackcloth as well as themſelves; not that they could conſider their cattle as having any occaſion to repent, but in order to expreſs, in a ſtronger manner, their own humiliation

humiliation and contrition. *And the king cauſed it to be proclaimed, and publiſhed through Nineveh, by a decree of the king and his nobles, ſaying, Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock, taſte any thing; let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beaſt be covered with ſackcloth.* Jonah iii. 7, 8.

Agreeable to theſe prevailing ideas, though circumciſion was a religious rite, inſtituted as a ſymbol of the covenant between God and the children of Abraham by Iſaac and Jacob, yet not only was Iſhmael circumciſed, but all the *ſlaves* of Abraham, who could have no more intereſt in the promiſes made to him, than others who were bleſſed in his ſeed, and who were not to be circumciſed, ſuch were the converts to chriſtianity. *This is my covenant which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee; every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed, and ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your fore-ſkin, and it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old ſhall be circumciſed among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in thy houſe, or bought with money of any ſtranger, which is not of thy ſeed. He that is born in thy houſe, and he that is bought with thy money muſt needs be circumciſed; and my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh, for an everlaſting covenant. And the uncircumciſed man-child, whoſe fleſh of his fore-ſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.* Gen. xvii. 10—14. *And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumciſed in the fleſh of his fore-ſkin. And Iſhmael his ſon was thirteen years old when he was circumciſed in the fleſh of his*

his fore-ſkin. In the ſelf-ſame day was Abraham circumciſed and Iſhmael his ſon. And all the men of his houſe, born in the houſe, and bought with money of the ſtranger, were circumciſed with him. Ib. 24. to the end.

It is evident from this hiſtory of circumciſion, and of the practice of Abraham in conſequence of it, that the application of this rite to Iſhmael, and the ſlaves of the houſehold, was no more than, as it were, a neceſſary appendage to the circumciſion of Abraham, as the maſter of the family. It muſt be conſidered as his own act only, and therefore the conſent of Iſhmael and the ſlaves cannot be ſuppoſed to have been, in the leaſt degree, neceſſary. From the ſame principles we muſt alſo conclude, that circumciſion, as ſuch, could not expreſs any intereſt which the ſubjects of it had in the things ſignified by it; for then Iſhmael and the ſlaves would have had an equal intereſt in them.

There can be no doubt but that when the Jews, in future ages, made converts to their religion, they obliged every maſter of a family both to ſubmit to this rite himſelf, and likewiſe to ſee that all his houſehold, or all that depended upon him, did the ſame. For the ſame reaſon, whatever rite had been enjoined them, and whatever it had expreſſed, the ſame people would, no doubt, have applied it, in the ſame indiſcriminate manner, to the maſter of the family and all his houſehold. It was natural, therefore, for the apoſtles and other Jews, upon the inſtitution of baptiſm, as a token of the profeſſion of

of chriſtianity, without conſidering it as a ſubſtitute for circumciſion, to apply it to infants as well as adults. According to their general ideas, and eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, in ſimilar caſes, they could not have thought of adopting any other practice, without particular directions.

Accordingly we find in the ſcriptures, that the gaoler, profeſſing his faith in Chriſt, was baptized, *he and all his*, Acts xvi. 33. and that Lydia was baptized and *all her houſehold*, v. 15. Now it is certain, that to a Jew theſe phraſes would convey the idea of the children, at leaſt, if not of the domeſtic ſlaves, having been baptized, along with the head of the family. A Roman could not have underſtood them to include leſs than all who were ſubject to the *patria poteſtas*.

It alſo appears to me to be very evident, from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and the writings of the chriſtian fathers, that infant baptiſm was the uniform practice of the primitive chriſtians, and continued to be ſo till, among other ſuperſtitious notions, they got an idea of the efficacy of baptiſm, as ſuch, to waſh away ſins, and conſequently of the peculiar ſafety of dying preſently after being baptized, before any freſh guilt could be contracted. It is well known that, upon this account, the emperor Conſtantine, and others, deferred baptiſm till near the hour of death.

An argument derived from the uniform practice of the primitive chriſtians affects ſome perſons very little, but with me it has great weight, as an evidence of its having been the practice of

of the apoſtolical times, and having the ſanction of apoſtolical authority. Whatever appears to have been the practice of the apoſtles, I would conſcientiouſly conform to, by whatever reaſons I was led to conclude that it was their practice. Even their writings are no otherwiſe valuable, than as they are the moſt authentic evidence of what they *thought* and *did*; and in other caſes, where this evidence cannot be had, all chriſtians are guided by proofs that are leſs direct, and deciſive. Thus it is from the evidence of *tradition*, deduced from the uninterrupted practice of chriſtian churches, that we ſet apart, not the ſeventh, but the firſt day of the week for the purpoſe of public worſhip; and not from any authority that can be produced from the New Teſtament.

If we trace the progreſs of this affair a little farther, we ſhall find that when, by the prevalence of the liberal ſentiments of chriſtianity, more account was made of ſlaves, as beings of the ſame ſpecies with their maſters, and equally intereſted with them in the privileges and promiſes of the goſpel; and eſpecially when, in conſequence of this, they acquired more civil rites, and were allowed to act for themſelves more than they had done, they were conſidered as having religious intereſts of their own. Indeed, in the times of the Romans, ſlaves, being of different nations, were allowed (agreeable to the genius of the Pagan ſyſtem) to practiſe ſome of their peculiar religious rites; and a great many of the firſt chriſtian converts were ſlaves, their maſters,

maſters, at that time, not finding themſelves or their intereſt, affected by it, and therefore not taking any umbrage at it.

It happened alſo, that the power of a father over his children, was much leſs in theſe Northern nations of Europe, than it was in the Eaſt, or among the Romans, with whom alſo it inſenſibly declined. On this account, and alſo becauſe, from the very firſt promulgation of chriſtianity, it could not but be manifeſt that perſons were intereſted in it as *individuals*, and not as members of families, or ſocieties, I make no doubt, but that, in general, if there were adult children or ſlaves in a family, at the time that the maſter profeſſed himſelf a chriſtian, they were not baptized without their own conſent; but no conſideration, that can be ſuppoſed to have occurred either to Jews or Romans, could have led them to make the ſame exception in favour of infants.

Conſidering how very different are the ideas and cuſtoms of theſe times, and theſe parts of the world, from thoſe which prevailed among the Jews, when baptiſm was inſtituted, the peculiar reaſons for applying it to infants are, in a great meaſure, ceaſed. But ſtill, as the practice is of divine authority, it appears to me, that no innovation ought to be made in it by any power on earth; but that we ought rather to preſerve thoſe ideas which originally gave a propriety to it, eſpecially when there is nothing unnatural in them. For my own part, I endeavour to adhere to the primitive ideas abovementioned, and therefore I conſider the baptizing my children, not as directly implying that they

they have any intereſt in it, or in the things ſignified in it, but as a part of my own profeſſion of chriſtianity, and conſequently as an obligation which, as ſuch, I am under, to educate my children, and alſo to inſtruct my ſervants in the principles of the chriſtian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptiſm, infants are *indirectly* intereſted in it, whether they adhere to the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and thereby ſecure the bleſſings of it, when they become adults, ſo as to think and act for themſelves, or not.

It is poſſible that, at this time, and in theſe parts of the world, we may not ſee much reaſon for poſitive inſtitutions; but with the Jews, and indeed throughout all the eaſt, nothing is more common than to expreſs ſentiments and purpoſes by appropriated actions. Now, waſhing with water ſo naturally expreſſes purity of heart, and is a thing ſo agreeable in itſelf, eſpecially in hot countries, that we cannot wonder that it ſhould be made choice of, to denote the profeſſion of a religion, which brings men under the ſtricteſt obligations to repent and reform their lives, and particularly that John the Baptiſt, whoſe more immediate buſineſs it was to preach repentance, ſhould be directed to enjoin it.

Whether baptiſm be of earlier antiquity than John the Baptiſt, I own, I have not been able to ſatisfy myſelf. Maimonides, and the earlieſt Jewiſh writers, ſpeak of ſolemn baptiſm as a neceſſary attendant on circumciſion, and alſo as a practice that had been immemorial among them; ſo that whether it was tacitly implied in the original inſtitution of circumciſion

(which, indeed, ſeems to require, at leaſt, ablution, in which water was made uſe of) or whether it had been adopted afterwards, as naturally expreſſive of the new converts cleanſing themſelves from the impurities of their former ſtate of Heatheniſm, it was probably the cuſtom of the Jews at the time of our Saviour. If this was the caſe, and the Jews did univerſally both circumciſe and baptiſe all who were capable of it, when families were converted to their religion, there was both the leſs reaſon for explaining the nature and uſe of the rite, on the firſt mention of it, and our Lord, if he did not diſapprove of the practice, had ſtill leſs occaſion to deſcribe, more particularly than he has done, who were the proper ſubjects of baptiſm; and we may rather ſuppoſe, that he would have expreſsly reſtricted it to adult perſons, if he had intended that the prevailing cuſtom ſhould be altered. Conſequently, when a maſter of a family was converted to chriſtianity, he would, of courſe, baptiſe all his houſehold, and conſider himſelf as bound to inſtruct them in the principles of the religion which he profeſſed. This is an obligation which is held peculiarly ſacred over all the eaſt, and the pains which maſters of families take in conſequence of it ſeldom fail of ſucceſs. There is no point that a Mahometan is more intent upon, than making his children, and ſervants alſo, good muſſulmen; but when they quit their ſervice, they give themſelves no concern about their religion.

The readineſs with which the Jewiſh people in general conformed to the baptiſm of John, ſeems to have ariſen from their eaſily entering into

into the propriety of it, as expreſſing reſolutions of repentance and greater purity of life, by way of preparation for the kingdom of the Meſſiah; and they ſeem to have expected that the Meſſiah, or his forerunner, had a right to expect ſome ſuch compliance from them. For the phariſees ſay to John, *Why baptizeſt thou, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that Prophet.* John i. 25. I do not ſee, however, that they had any reaſon to expect the inſtitution of baptiſm, in particular, as a religious rite, under the Meſſiah; for though it was propheſied of him, that he ſhould *ſprinkle many nations*, Iſaiah lii. 15. I do not ſuppoſe that the Jews underſtood the prophecy, as implying any more than that he would convert, cleanſe, or purify them.

Obſervations on the Importance of Faith in Chriſt.

MANY perſons have been prejudiced againſt chriſtianity, on account of the ſtreſs which our Saviour and his apoſtles ſeem to lay on the mere *belief of the goſpel*, which is imagined to imply, that no perſon can be ſaved, or admitted to future happineſs, beſides profeſſing chriſtians. But it appears to me that, allowing the declarations of Chriſt and of the apoſtles, no more than the ſame favourable interpretation that the ſayings and writings of other perſons, at leaſt of the ſame antiquity and country, neceſſarily require, and eſpecially allowing them to be their own interpreters, there will be no great difficulty in any of the paſſages objected to.

I cannot think that the real meaning of Chriſt and his apoſtles was, that any man will be ſaved on account of his *faith only*, or condemned for the mere want of it, though both of them may ſeem to be aſſerted by them, and eſpecially by our Lord, when he ſaid, *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Mark xvi. 6.

That the former of theſe clauſes, which contains as abſolute a declaration as any that I can find to this purpoſe, was not intended to be conſidered as literally and univerſally true, is evident from numberleſs paſſages of the ſcriptures, particularly from our Lord's ſaying, *Not every one that ſays unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven.* Matt. vii. 21. As therefore, it is plain, from this paſſage, that we cannot infer from the form of expreſſion, in the former of the clauſes above quoted, that every believer of chriſtianity ſhall be ſaved, ſo neither can we conclude from the latter clauſe, that every unbeliever ſhall be damned.

That this expreſſion of our Lord was conſidered by his followers as admitting of this latitude, is evident, even from that paſſage in the writings of St. Paul, which has ſometimes been quoted for a different purpoſe. *If our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, leſt the glorious light of the goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. From this paſſage, I think, we may clearly infer, that the cauſe of unbelief,

unbelief, in all thoſe who periſhed, was the *God of this world*, that is, the *vices of the world*, having blinded their minds, ſo that their caſe was not *mere unbelief*, but unbelief ariſing from vicious prejudices and bad habits. In fact, therefore, they were condemned on account of their vicious habits, and their unbelief was conſidered as only a *mark* or *ſymptom* of their being under the power of vicious habits.

The numberleſs paſſages which expreſs that men are condemned on account of their *vices only*, joined with thoſe that expreſsly aſſert, that no favour will be ſhewn to any man on account of his *faith only*, but rather, that more is expected of him on that account, and therefore that he will incur the greater condemnation, if he do not bring forth the fruits of it, certainly authorizes us to conclude, that ſince it is not *faith*, but the *fruits of faith*, or *good works*, that may be called the ground of ſalvation, ſo alſo that *unbelief* is never, of itſelf, the ground or cauſe of any man's condemnation, but only the *vices* that have either been the cauſe of it, or have ſprung from it.

What St. Paul ſays, Rom. ii. 12. concerning thoſe who *have not the law*, and alſo of *faith coming by hearing*, and men not being able to *hear without a preacher*, Rom. x. 17. makes it evident that, according to his ideas, all mankind are to be judged according to the light that is afforded them; and, without his deſcending to any more particulars, we may fairly apply the general maxim on which he argues, to the caſe of perſons living among chriſtians, as well as to thoſe who never heard of Chriſt, if they be ſo

ſituated, that the evidences of chriſtianity are never fairly laid before them.

It is by no means every man who lives among chriſtians, either papiſts or proteſtants, who has an opportunity of ſeeing what chriſtianity really is. That which is continually expoſed to their view, may be ſo exceedingly adulterated, that their common ſenſe cannot admit of it, and their circumſtances and employment in life may be ſuch, that it ſhall be morally impoſſible for them to inform themſelves better concerning it; ſo that, with the moſt ingenuous diſpoſitions, they may continue unbelievers. In this caſe, ſurely, the genuine ſenſe and ſpirit of every declaration in the ſcriptures, authorizes and encourages the greateſt candour.

Conſidering, however, the many powerful motives to virtue which the chriſtian religion preſents to the mind, and the evidence with which it is attended, ſufficient, if it be fairly propoſed, to ſecure the aſſent of all who are unprejudiced, and whoſe minds are not enſlaved by vicious habits, the aweful declarations, quoted above, againſt infidels are, in general, no doubt, very juſt, notwithſtanding ſome unbelievers may be ſo peculiarly circumſtanced as to find mercy. For my own part, I muſt acknowledge that, with reſpect to the generality of modern unbelievers, I have no charity for them, except good will; and their condition fills me with concern; becauſe I cannot help thinking that a very wrong ſtate of mind, a ſtate of mind to which chriſtianity holds out nothing but *a fearful looking-for of judgment*, is the cauſe of their unbelief; and that nothing is requiſite to make

them

them ſee and rejoice in the evidences of chriſtianity, but a truly virtuous and ingenuous diſpoſition.

It is with equal truth, and much more pleaſure, that I muſt acknowledge that I cannot think ſo uncharitably of all my acquaintance among unbelievers. Some of them, I have all the reaſon in the world to think, are men of excellent diſpoſitions, and want nothing but a firm belief of chriſtianity to make them as perfect as humanity will admit. With this perſuaſion, I, who am a firm believer in chriſtianity myſelf, am under a neceſſity of ſuppoſing, that, in ſome particular caſes, there may be other prejudices, ſufficient to prevent a perſon from embracing chriſtianity, beſides thoſe which ariſe from a vicious and licentious diſpoſition. It may be the pleaſure a man takes in thinking himſelf free from popular prejudices, or ſomething elſe of a ſimilar, and not *very criminal* nature; but ſomething of which he may not be ſufficiently aware. *Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.*

As it is expreſsly aſſerted, that Chriſt came *to bleſs mankind, in turning them away from their iniquities*, Acts iii. 26. I think I am authorized to conſider the chriſtian religion as a *means to an end*; and, therefore, if the great end of it, viz. the reformation and virtue of men, be, in fact, attained by any other means, the benevolent author of it will not be offended, but rejoice at it, and ſay, *He that is not againſt us is on our part*, Mark ix. 40.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

By inſerting the following obſervations upon ſome paſſages of ſcripture, you will oblige a well-wiſher to the Repoſitory.

A. B. C.

ST. Paul, in one place, ſays, that Abraham begat Iſaac when he was *as good as dead*, ταυτα νενεκρωμενου, dead as to theſe things, κατα being underſtood. Heb. xi. 12. In another place he ſays, that Abraham, *being not weak in faith, conſidered not his own body now dead*, ηδη νενεκρωμενον, Rom. iv. 19. This is ſaid of Abraham when he was about a hundred years old, and is aſſigned by the apoſtle, as a proof that Iſaac was born to him out of the courſe of nature. This is what St. Paul's argument, in both places, requires; for he is magnifying the faith of Abraham in believing *againſt hope*, that he ſhould have a child by Sarah. It may be neceſſary here to obſerve, that though the apoſtle, in Heb. xi. 11. ſpeaks of Sarah's faith, *in being delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed*; yet, in the following verſe, he certainly ſpeaks of Abraham. *Therefore ſprang there even of one*, not of one woman, but απ' ενος, of one man. The birth of Iſaac, it is plain, is ſpoken of as an event beyond the common courſe of nature.

Now,

Now, how is this to be reconciled with Gen. xxv. at the beginning? There we are told, that after the death of Sarah, according to the preſent diſpoſition of the chapters; nay, when Iſaac was forty years old, which was his age when he married Rebecca (ſee verſe 20.) and, conſequently, when Abraham was one hundred and forty, he had ſix ſons by Keturah. Could he be the father of ſix children in the courſe of nature at one hundred and forty, when it is expreſsly ſaid, that Iſaac was born to him out of the courſe of nature at one hundred?

The apoſtle's words are capable of no other conſtruction than what our verſion gives them; we muſt, therefore, conſult Gen. xxv. 1. and examine whether it is juſtly tranſlated. The Hebrew is, ויסף אברהם ויקח אשה ושמה קטורה, which our tranſlators have rendered, *Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name* was *Keturah*, that is, according to this verſion, he took her after the death of Sarah. But I apprehend that the true meaning of the verb יסף, in this paſſage, is miſtaken. The primary ſenſe of the word is, *to add to, to increaſe, to augment, to do ſtill more, to go on doing, to repeat an action.* A plain and ſimple ſenſe, ſays Dr. Taylor. The ſeventy have rendered it, in this place, προθεμενος, a participle of προστιθεμι, *oppono, pergo*, and, paſſively, *adjungor*, to be joined to. Our tranſlators underſtood it here in the ſenſe of *pergo*, to go on, or proceed, as Tremellius and Junius did; but Arias Montanus hath here rendered it *addidit*. It is true, that, *to go on*, or *proceed*, is a ſenſe which this verb very frequently has; but, however, it is rather a figurative ſenſe, for

for its ſtrict meaning is, *to add to*, or to increaſe. It has the other ſenſe, becauſe that in increaſing, we proceed, or go on. To remove this inconſiſtency between St. Paul and Moſes, I would read this verſe, "And Abraham had added to "(his other wives) and had taken a wife whoſe "name was Keturah." That is, he had taken her during the life of Sarah, moſt probably many years before her death. We are told, verſe ſixth, that he had children by concubines, of whom Keturah was one. Hagar was a concubine, but that ſhe was the ſame perſon with Keturah, there is no particular reaſon to believe. If this verſion of the paſſage be juſt, and I am much miſtaken, if it is not quite agreeable to the Hebrew, then the inconſiſtency between Moſes and St. Paul entirely vaniſhes. The former has recorded a fact out of order, as to time, becauſe, in the foregoing chapter, he was relating what immediately concerned Iſaac and his mother Sarah.*

* A farther confirmation of the ingenious writer's illuſtration of this paſſage ſeems to ariſe from verſe 6. where it is ſaid, that *Abraham gave gifts unto the ſons of the concubines whom he had, and ſent them away from Iſaac his ſon, while he yet lived, Eaſtward unto the Eaſt country.* Now, if Moſes includes the ſons of Keturah, whom he had named in the preceding verſes, among the ſons of the concubines, as is moſt likely (and yet Abraham did not take Keturah to wife till he was 140 years old, or near it, but died at the age of 175, verſe 7.) it will follow, that ſome of theſe ſons muſt have been portioned and ſent out into the world to ſeek ſettlements at a very early age; much earlier than, as ſeems probable, youth were, in that period of the world, thought to be qualified for ſuch undertakings, and, conſequently, than was conſiſtent with Abraham's prudence and paternal affection. VIGILIUS.

It

It may be obſerved here, for the confirmation of what we have above ſaid, that Moſes hath related nothing but what had ſome reference to Iſaac or Sarah from the birth of Iſaac, till this time. Hagar and her ſon Iſhmael are mentioned becauſe they were thruſt out for mocking. In the cloſe of chapter 22. we have an account of Nahor's deſcendants, whoſe granddaughter Rebekah became Iſaac's wife. The affair concerning Abimelech, chapter 23. naturally aroſe from what is ſaid in chapter 20. And the reaſon why Keturah is mentioned at all, ſeems to have been, becauſe her deſcendants became very numerous and powerful.

HAVING never ſeen a ſatisfactory explanation of 2 Peter, i. 17—19. I beg leave, in your Repoſitory, to give my ſentiments of the apoſtle's meaning.

They have much reaſon on their ſide, who place a colon at the end of verſe 18. as the ſenſe of the paſſage is certainly much clearer in that connection. Mr. Markland and Dr. Benſon have produced ſeveral undoubted teſtimonies to prove that εχειν βεβαιοτερον, means, "more fully to confirm, or eſtabliſh." *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount:* And (by that means) we have the prophetical word more fully confirmed. Or, perhaps, βεβαιοτερον, may be underſtood ſubſtantively, *confirmation.* As there is one manuſcript which hath των προφητικων λογων, this may be the right conſtruction. And we have (hereby) a confirmation of the prophetical words *i. e.*

verſe

verſe 17. taken from Iſaiah xlii. 1.) that paſſage in Iſaiah, how clear ſoever it might be thought a prediction of Chriſt, was rendered much clearer when it was thus applied to him by a voice from heaven. Thus far the ſenſe is very intelligible; but the remaining part of verſe 19. is not without its difficulties, ω καλως ποιειτε προσεχοντες ως λυχνω φαινοντι εν αυχμηρω τοπω, εως ου ημερα διαυγαση και φωσφορος ανατειλη εν ταις καρδιας υμων. "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as "unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, un-"til the day dawn and the day ſtar ariſeth in "your hearts." I would obſerve here, that the preſent tenſe may be perfect, expreſſing an action juſt done; or imperfect, expreſſing ſomething doing, but not done. Ποιειτε, here ſeems to have this imperfect ſignification, and, I apprehend, may be rendered, "Ye *did* well, *i. e.* in taking heed." Διαυγαση and ανατειλη, are both firſt aoriſts, and therefore may be underſtood in any time, for the aoriſts are indeterminate in their ſenſe, and are uſed for any time, paſt, preſent, or future. (See inſtances produced by the late learned Dr. Gregory Sharpe, in his Origin and Structure of the Greek Tongue, page 63.) If theſe obſervations are right, we may read the whole verſe thus: "And we have hereby a con-"firmation of the prophetical words, whereunto "ye did well in taking heed as unto a light "ſhining in a dark place, until the day dawned, "and the day ſtar aroſe in your hearts;" That is, they had done well, in attending to this prophecy, which, however obſcure, was better than no light at all, until Jeſus the Meſſiah appeared,

who

who filled men's hearts and minds, with light and knowledge. See Dr. George Benſon, on this place; and Mr. Bower's Conjectural Emendations on the New Teſtament. London, 1763.

The following Note to that Part of Socrates Scholaſticus's *Remarks, where it is ſaid, that the Doctrine of the* No Pre-exiſtence *ſeems to be the Sentiment of the Apoſtolic Fathers, &c. came too late to be inſerted in the preceding Number.*

I Am aware, that it will appear to ſome, that there are, in the writings of St. Barnabas, and St. Hermas, expreſs aſſertions of the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, which are very deciſive upon the ſubject.

But whoever conſiders how much theſe Jewiſh fathers were accuſtomed to myſtical applications of the Old Teſtament to Chriſt, and what fanciful and ungrounded applications they have actually made of particular paſſages to him, will not think there is much ſtreſs to be laid on their teſtimony, given in ſuch a way.

Barnabas, for inſtance, in his catholic epiſtle, if it be really his (for ſuch good judges as Baſnage, and the learned Mr. J. Jones, have ſtrongly ſupported the contrary opinion) ſays, once and again, that it was the Lord Chriſt, to whom God ſaid, at the beginning of the world, *Let us make man after our own image and likeneſs.* Gen. i. 26.

But the ſame writer ſays, in the ſame epiſtle, and I give Archbiſhop Wake's tranſlation, page 285-6.

285-6. "Underſtand, therefore, children, theſe "things more fully, that Abraham, who was "the firſt that gave circumciſion in the ſpirit, "looking forwards to Jeſus, circumciſed, tak-"ing the myſtery of three letters. For the "ſcripture ſays, that Abraham circumciſed "*three hundred and eighteen* men of his houſe. "But what therefore was the myſtery that was "made known unto him? I will tell you: It "conſiſts in the *eighteen*, and next in the *three* "*hundred*; For the numeral letters of ten and "eight, are I H. And theſe denote *Jeſus*. "And becauſe the croſs was that by which we "were to find grace; therefore he adds, *three* "*hundred*; the note of which is T (*the figure of* "*his croſs*.) Wherefore, by two letters he ſig-"nified Jeſus, and by one, his croſs. He who "has put the natural gift of his doctrine within "us, knows, that I never ſhewed to any one "a more genuine truth: But I truſt that ye "are worthy of it."

Surely much dependence is not to be made upon ſuch a writer's judgment in the application of paſſages of the Old Teſtament to Chriſt.

Hermas's writings are all of them ſtill more profeſſedly, viſion, parable, and ſimilitude. Page 492, in the Archbiſhop's tranſlation, he ſays, "Hearken, this rock and this gate are "the ſon of God. I replied; Sir, how can that "be; ſeeing the rock is old, but the gate new? "Hear, ſaid he, O fooliſh man! and under-"ſtand. The ſon of God is indeed more an-"cient than any creature, inſomuch that he was "in council with his Father at the creation of

all

"all things." Again, page 334, "Who is "that old woman? He anſwered me, It is the "church of God. And I ſaid unto him; Why "then does ſhe appear old? She is, therefore, "ſays he, an old woman, becauſe ſhe is the firſt "of all the creation, and the world was made "for her."

Whoever conſiders the good Father's manner of writing, will perceive that the former of theſe paſſages is no more than a high figurative expreſſion, to ſignify that Almighty God made all things with reſpect to his Son, and to be interpreted in the ſame way as the latter.

And there are good authors who have thought they had cauſe to underſtand the above quoted paſſage of Barnabas, of the ſpiritual, new creation in Chriſt Jeſus, particularly upon a compariſon with the ſection next following, which is preſerved to us as in the Greek original, whereas the other is only in a Latin tranſlation.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

If you think the following hints on two paſſages of ſcripture worth attention, I would beg a corner for them ſomewhere in your Theological Collection.

VIGILIUS.

Philippians ii. 5—11.

IN this much agitated paſſage, the apoſtle ſeems to me to make one of his *delicate* alluſions, viz.

viz. to the caſe of Adam and the hiſtory of the fall, and to ſuggeſt to the conſideration of his readers, a contraſt between the temper and behaviour of the firſt Adam, and of Chriſt, the ſecond Adam.

The firſt Adam was the workmanſhip of the hand of God, who is ſaid to have *created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him.* Gen. i. 27. He gave him alſo *dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth.* ver. 28. But when the tempter ſuggeſted that, by eating of the prohibited tree of knowledge of good and evil, they ſhould become *as gods*, actuated by a vain ambition to become more than man, and *like unto God*, Adam, as well as his wife, diſobeyed the commandment which God had given them; in conſequence whereof, by the juſt ſentence of God, they were degraded, expelled from paradiſe, and condemned to labour, pain and death.

But Chriſt, though he was *in the form of God* in a much more perfect manner than Adam, *did not*, like him, αρπαγμον ηγησαλο, *reckon it a prize*, and accordingly attempt to ſeize it by violence, without right, and againſt expreſs prohibition, *to be like unto God*; but, on the contrary, with great condeſcenſion and good will to men, *he emptied himſelf* of that dignity, power, and authority which God had given him, *taking the form of a ſervant*, (See Matt. xx. 28. Luke xxii. 27. John xiii. 12, &c.) *being in the likeneſs of men; and* further, *being found in faſhion*, form, or condition, *as a man*, who is a weak, dependant creature,

creature, and owes entire ſubjection and obedience to God, *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*; for ſuch was the tenor of that commandment he had received from the Father; ſee John x. 18. So widely different were his ſentiments and conduct, reſpecting both his brethren and his Father, from thoſe of Adam. Accordingly, his recompence from God was widely different alſo. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, &c.*

To conſider the paſſage in this view, places it, to me at leaſt, in a ſtriking and beautiful light, makes it perfectly conformable to St. Paul's manner of thinking and writing in many other places, and gives it great ſtrength and cogency to enforce the preceding exhortations. What influence it may have on the controverſy relative to the pre-exiſtence, &c. I leave to the ſagacity of the gentlemen concerned in it, and therefore attempt not to explain the preciſe import of particular words and phraſes. Perhaps a too cloſe attention to that controverſy, and to thoſe words and phraſes, may have prevented the learned from viewing the whole paſſage in the light in which I have now placed it.

IN the 55th page of the preface to the ſecond edition of *Peters's Diſſertation on Job*, is a curious illuſtration of the word *Shiloh*, שילה, which he takes to be a *ſymbolical word*, compoſed of the firſt letters of ſeveral words. The hint was given him by the Chaldee Paraphraſt

Onkelos, who thus explains the word in Chaldee, דדיליה היא מלכותא, *whoſe is the kingdom:* which Mr. Peters thus turns into Hebrew, ש יש לו המלוכה, the firſt letters of which words make *Shilah*, as he contends it ought to be pronounced. I would offer the following remark on this *note:*

I conceive that we may collect a material ſupport to Mr. Peters's very curious and ingenious illuſtration of the word *Shiloh*, from a much higher and more early authority than that of the Chaldee Paraphraſt, even from a prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. xxi. 27. The prophet is then foretelling the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the ruin of Zedekiah, and the ſubverſion of the kingly government among the Jews. Ver. 26. *Remove the diadem, take off the crown, this ſhall not be the ſame:* i. e. the diadem, the crown, the kingly government ſhall not be continued or reſtored. *Exalt him that is low, and abaſe him that is high:* The government ſhall hereafter be transferred into families that are now of mean rank, and the Houſe of David ſhall be reduced to a low ſtate. Ver. 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; until he come, whoſe right it is, and I will give it him*; i. e. until the promiſed Son of David come, whoſe right the crown, the diadem, the kingly government is. עד בא אשר לו המשפט, *Whoſe is the judgment.* How parallel is this to ש יש לו המלוכה, *Whoſe is the kingdom?* Can one doubt whether the prophet had the word *Shiloh* in his view, and meant to explain it by this periphraſis, though not to give us the very words, of the initials of which that word is

is compoſed? Certainly, the words of Jacob's prophecy were in his thoughts, עד כי יבא שילה, *Until Shiloh come.* Gen. xlix. 10. The parallel is equally clear and ſtriking in the ſeventy. Gen. xlix. 10. they tranſlate thus, εως αν ελθη ω αποκειται: and Ezekiel xxi. 27. εως ȣ ελθη ω καθηκει. It is further obſervable, that from the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Babylonians, till about the time of the birth of Chriſt, the Jews were never governed by any of the family of David, or by any king wearing crown, or diadem. Quere; Might not Ezekiel's word המשפט, be ſubſtituted well enough for המלוכה, in Mr. Peters's Hebrew Verſion of Onkelos's Chaldee?

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg the favour of your inſerting in the next number of your Repoſitory *the following criticiſm, which I learned in converſation with an ingenious clergyman of my acquaintance; who, I am ſure, can have no objection to its being generally known, though I have no authority to mention his name.*

I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c.

LIBERIUS.

WHEN St. Paul ſays, 1 Cor. xv. 27. that all things ſhall be put under the feet of Chriſt, he adds, δηλον οτι εκτος τȣ υποταξαντος αυτω τα παντα, which we render, *It is manifeſt that he is excepted who did put all things under him.* But

the word εκτος, is ſometimes uſed in a different ſenſe, viz. for *beſides*, or *excluſive of*; and therefore the paſſage may be rendered, *But when he ſays, That all things are put under him, it is manifeſtly excluſive of their ſubjection to him that put all things under him.*

According to our tranſlation of this paſſage, the obſervation ſeems to be altogether needleſs and impertinent; for who could not but know, that he who gave authority, and eſpecially in the caſe of the Supreme Being, muſt be exempt from it himſelf; whereas it may be well worth while to remind the diſciples of Chriſt, of what ſome of them, eſpecially the Moravians, ſeem to have forgotten, viz. that though God has made them ſubject to Chriſt, as their maſter, it is not intended to exempt them from that homage and allegiance which is due to himſelf as ſupreme, and of whom Chriſt himſelf holds the authority of which he is poſſeſſed.

The word εκτος, is uſed in the ſame ſenſe in the ſeventy, Dan. xi. 4. *His kingdom ſhall be plucked up, even for others* BESIDES *thoſe*; and alſo in Acts xxvi. 22. *Saying none other things than* [εκτος, BESIDES] *thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come.*

THE

Theological Repoſitory.

A Letter ſent by Mr. Tomkins, *Author of a treatiſe entitled* Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, *to Dr.* Lardner, *in Reply to his Letter on the* Logos.

TO PHILALETHES.

I Am greatly obliged to you for communicating your thoughts to me upon the important ſubjects treated of in your Papers, though I cannot come into your ſentiments. I now ſend you my remarks, as you deſire, without compliment, and I do aſſure you without reſentment. I think your Papinian can find nothing that ſhould move reſentment, unleſs it be that ſuſpicion, and that you ſhould think him capable of reſentment upon account of your having different notions from him. I ſhall give you my thoughts upon thoſe matters with the ſame freedom as you have given yours.

I agree with you that we ought to inſiſt on no more than the uſe of ſcripture expreſſions,

without the addition of human explications: Yet I think it concerns every chriſtian to get as clear notions as he can of the account the ſcripture gives of our Saviour, and that it is of importance to ſet that matter in a clear light; eſpecially ſince the common explications have, I think, manifeſtly done great prejudice to chriſtianity among thoſe who have been diſaffected towards it.

You would guard againſt the charge of Neſtorianiſm, but I think the account you give of the deity of Chriſt, doth make the ſupreme God and the man Jeſus one perſon, which, I muſt own, ſeems to me a greater abſurdity than that Neſtorius was charged with. I may have occaſion to take farther notice of this hereafter.

Your ſuppoſition of the Logos neceſſarily recovering its priſtine vigour, power, &c. immediately upon its being diſlodged from the body; and the difficulty of conceiving him capable of exaltation, will be conſidered when I ſhall give you my notion of the incarnation.

I ſhall now proceed to your obſervations upon texts.

You obſerve, in the firſt place, that Chriſt is called *man*, which you think could not be juſt and proper, if he were ſuch a being as we conceive the Logos to be, inhabiting fleſh. I would aſk you, what is the notion we have, or can have, of *man*, or what do we underſtand by that word, but ſuch an organiſed body as ours is, animated by an intelligent mind? Whether that mind pre-exiſted, or began to exiſt with the formation of the body what was its ſtate or capacity,

capacity, in what rank or order of beings it was before it was united to ſuch a body, theſe are things that do not at all enter into our notion of humanity, or any ways concern it. Where we ſee ſuch a body as our own, animated in the ſame manner as we find our own to be, *i. e.* by an intelligent mind or ſpirit, under the ſame laws of union; undoubtedly we ſhould call this being a *man*; eſpecially, when it was known that he was born into the world, and arrived to maturity in the ſame manner as we do. Certainly thoſe who ſuppoſed all *human ſouls* to have pre-exiſted, had no other notion of *humanity*. If we conceive the Logos brought into the ſame ſtate as a human ſoul, under all the laws of ſuch an union as we find in the conſtitution of *man*, this ſpirit, whatever were its previous ſtate, may now, in the utmoſt ſtrictneſs, be reckoned a *human ſoul*, it may, I think, very properly be ſaid the Logos, ſo taking *fleſh*, *became a human ſoul.*

We can have no demonſtration that our own ſouls did not pre-exiſt, or what might be their ſtate before they came into bodies, what ſort of beings they then were; and therefore, I think we can have no other juſt notion of *man*, than ſuch as I have deſcribed.

But you conceive ſuch an humiliation of the Logos as I contend for, impoſſible. Where is the contradiction in ſuppoſing any being, beſides the ſelf-exiſtent neceſſary being, capable of undergoing ſuch a change? What is there in the nature of things that ſhould make ſuch a depreſſion of a being impoſſible, any more than ſhould

make ſuch an advancement as your hypotheſis requires, impoſſible? that is to ſay, Why may not I as well ſuppoſe it poſſible for a being, derived from the power and will of God, and capable, under him, of creating the world, to become a *human ſoul*; as you ſuppoſe it poſſible, that a *human ſoul*, ſuch as ours is, ſhould be raiſed to ſuch a degree of perfection as to know at once all the thoughts of men and angels, to uphold all things, to be the governor of the univerſe, and the final judge of all? This humiliation of the Logos, is, indeed, wonderful and beyond all imagination. And, therefore, ſay I, the more likely to be true, *i. e.* to be the ſcripture notion, for the ſcripture repreſents it as ſuch. We read of a length and breadth, a height and depth of the love of Chriſt, that paſſes knowledge.

Were the Logos, retaining its original ſtate, only to take a human body after the manner of angels appearing in human form, ſuch a being might, as you expreſs it, ſwallow up the body, &c. But his humiliation, as I conceive it, was not the being merely united to a body (ſo he is now in his exalted ſtate) but in his ſubmitting to the ſame ſtate of humanity as we are in, without ſin. He was in all things to be made like to his brethren, and therefore partook of fleſh and blood, παραπλησιως, Heb. ii. in like manner as we do. And this may account for his not returning to his priſtine vigour and power immediately upon his leaving the body. For it was not merely the having a body that interrupted that liberty and ſplendor. He hath all this now in a body,

a body, but we are to conceive him ſubmitting to a ſtate of humiliation which was not to expire till after his reſurrection. It was appointed that he ſhould taſte death for every man, and, conſequently, that in the ſtate of death he ſhould be conformed to us as well as in the ſtate of life in the fleſh here. And if that be made to appear to carry in it an utter unconſciouſneſs (which, indeed, is not my notion of it) I ſhould make no ſcruple of ſuppoſing that the Logos was for that time in a ſtate of unconſciouſneſs.

It may not be improper to take notice, in this place, of what you ſay relating to the reſurrection of Chriſt, at the latter end of your diſcourſe. "What is there extraordinary, ſay you, "according to the Arians, in the reſurrection of "Chriſt, and how doth it aſſure us of ours?" I anſwer, He being to be made like unto us in life here, and in the ſtate of death which we were ſubject to; his reſurrection is a pattern of ours, and having died for us, or, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *being delivered for our offences*, his reſurrection is an aſſurance of ours. The aſſurance we have of a reſurrection from the reſurrection of Chriſt, I do not apprehend to lie ſo much in our having thereby an evidence of the divine power in raiſing the dead; there had been before that, other inſtances ſufficient for that purpoſe; but in the aſſurance that we have thereby, that we ſhall obtain a reſurrection to eternal life if we belong to him. *He was delivered for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification. If Chriſt be not riſen, you are yet in your ſins. God hath*

hath raiſed him from the dead and hath given him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God. Upon this account he is *the firſt fruits. If ye believe that Chriſt died and roſe again. So them that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.*

As to what you urge in another place concerning our hope of being like to Chriſt hereafter, I do not ſee that it affects the Arian notion any more than it doth yours. The glory he is now poſſeſſed of, is the ſame in either ſcheme. And as he attained to it by being obedient even unto death, ſo ſhall we attain to a likeneſs of glory in our meaſure by following his example. I ſuppoſe you do not imagine that any of the ſaints will come up to an equality with him.

You farther object againſt the Arian notion of the humiliation of the Logos, that if it were poſſible, it would not be reaſonable, and juſt. But I ſee no difficulty in this, provided a valuable end be anſwered, and this excellent being do himſelf approve it, and conſent to it, and do really receive advantage by it, which I take to be the caſe here; as you will ſee farther by and by.

I was now going to enter upon the conſideration of the texts relating to the pre-exiſtence, but I thought it would be better firſt to attempt the removing out of the way the difficulty you urge about Chriſt's temptation. I would willingly leave nothing that might be a prejudice againſt the ſcripture account of this matter, which I muſt own appears to me exceeding plain and clear. I do confeſs, the temptation of Chriſt doth,

doth, at firſt view, ſeem very ſtrange. But I apprehend this to ariſe, in great part, from our not attending to the ſtate and condition he was in. We come poſſeſſed with a notion of the high perfection and glory of the Logos, whereas we ſhould conſider him as being now under all the laws of union with fleſh, or, if you will allow me to uſe the expreſſion, as being a human ſoul embodied. So that the things of ſenſe, and of this world, made the ſame kind of impreſſion upon him, and affected him juſt in the ſame manner as they do us, and ſo were really temptations. But you ſay, "Had not the Logos in fleſh a remembrance of his former ſtate?" I make no queſtion of it: but that remembrance was, perhaps, no more than a general knowledge of his having been in a happy glorious ſtate; not the recovering particular ideas and ſenſations which he had in that ſtate. But let me aſk you, Had not your perfect man the infallible expectation of the joy that was ſet before him? Was he not conſcious of the intimate union there was between him and the Father? Was he not, according to you, even then in the form of God? If theſe things do not ſet him above the being capable of temptation, why ſhould the remembrance of having been happy and glorious before he came into this ſtate of trial? This latter might be a farther advantage, but I do not ſee that this, in itſelf is more conſiſtent with the being actually tempted, than the other things are. Your queries about his temptations, p. 3, 4. do, as far as I can perceive, carry as great difficulty upon the ſuppoſition of what you allow

low him to be, and to know (remembering that theſe temptations were after the voice from heaven, and the ſpirit's deſcending upon him) as upon my ſuppoſition of his remembering what he formerly was. But to clear this matter, as well as I can, I conſider that temptation lies in the impreſſion that ſenſible things make upon the mind in its preſent ſtate. When ſuch impreſſion tends to excite unlawful deſigns, &c. the reſiſting theſe by conſiderations worthy of a reaſonable being is virtue; and according to the ſtrength of the impreſſion, whether of pleaſure or pain, ſo is the temptation to be reckoned greater or leſs. I doubt I have not expreſſed myſelf ſo accurately as I ſhould have done; but I ſuppoſe I have ſaid enough to lead one of your ſagacity into my notion of the matter. I ſuppoſe St. Paul, after he had been caught up into paradiſe, found the evils of this preſent world temptations, as well as before, though the remembrance of that rapture was, undoubtedly, a great help to him in reſiſting. Now as Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh, had the ſame kind of trials as we have, the like appetites, like paſſions, the ſame ſenſation of pleaſure, pain, grief, fear, &c. though he be ſuppoſed to have peculiar advantages in ſome reſpects, this doth not hinder but that he may be an example to us, for he reſiſted and overcame in the ſame manner as we muſt do; he walked by faith, looking to the joy that was ſet before him, he prayed and truſted in God. St. Paul had the peculiar advantage above mentioned. We may ſay, that all the firſt chriſtians had great advantage above us, in ſeeing the miracles wrought in confirmation of the hope of the goſpel,

goſpel, eſpecially thoſe of them who had themſelves the gifts of the ſpirit; yet I think they are very juſtly propoſed as examples to us, having, through faith and patience, inherited the promiſes.

Chriſt, the only begotten ſon of God, according to every received notion concerning his perſon, muſt be conceived in ſome reſpects to have peculiar advantage above what any other could have: And perhaps his trials, all things conſidered, were vaſtly ſuperior to the trials of others. I cannot help thinking, that his agony in the garden, and his complaint upon the croſs, did ariſe from ſomewhat more than the mere apprehenſion of what he was to ſuffer in the body, or from the actual pain of ſuffering. And it is probable, that the devil, in the temptations recorded, took him, as I may ſay, at the greateſt advantage, when the circumſtances he was in, made him moſt liable to the impreſſion of the things then propoſed to him.

I have endeavoured to ſhow, that the incarnation and humiliation of ſuch a being as the Logos, is not impoſſible, or unreaſonable, or inconſiſtent with the account the ſcripture gives us of Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh. I ſhall now proceed to take notice of ſome texts that, in my apprehenſion, do plainly aſſert it, or evidently ſuppoſe it, or ſeem beſt to agree with this notion. I ſhall begin with ſome paſſages in St. John's goſpel; leaving that of the Logos to be conſidered when I come to remark on your notion of the deity of Chriſt.

In the firſt chapter, there is one paſſage that ſeems to me plainly to intend the pre-exiſtence.

No

No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten ſon, ο ων εις τον, &c. *who was in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.* I think that muſt refer to his having been in the boſom of the Father, and ſeen him, before he declared him to us. Compare this with what Chriſt himſelf ſays to Nicodemus in the third chapter, which is more expreſs; *No man hath aſcended into heaven, i. e.* ſo as to have been there, *but the ſon of man who came down from heaven.* What can this mean, but that the ſon of man was there, before he came down into this world, in the ſame manner as a man would be there, whom you ſhould ſuppoſe to have aſcended thither. The following words, I think, determine this to be the ſenſe, *No man hath aſcended into heaven, but he who came from heaven, even the ſon of man,* ο ων εν τω ϗραδνω, *who was in heaven.* To ſay nothing of his being the bread, which God gave them *from heaven,* as he had given to the Jews of old, the manna *from heaven,* or of his *coming down from heaven,* to do the will of his Father; an expreſſion never uſed, as I remember, concerning any other man ſent from God, though the like is uſed concerning angels, who are ſuppoſed to have their reſidence in heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 47. *The firſt man is* χοικος, earthly: *the ſecond man is the Lord,* εξ ϗρανε. To paſs theſe expreſſions, what other ſenſe can we put upon thoſe words, v. 62. of that 6th chapter of John. *What, and if ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man aſcending,* οπϗ ην το προτερον. Jo. viii. 53, &c. ſeems too plain to be evaded. I have not Grotius: I have always thought moſt of his interpretations of the paſſages concerning

cerning our Saviour, where he falls in with the Socinians, to be forced and unnatural. It is evident, the Jews diſcourſe related to a real exiſtence; and the expreſſion Chriſt uſes concerning Abraham, hath the ſame reference, πριν Αβρααμ γενεσθαι. It is plain, I think, that the Jews underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, what Chriſt ſaid concerning himſelf; and as to the latter words, *before Abraham was, I am*, I do not ſee what ſhould lead them to underſtand him otherwiſe. If that were not his meaning, it ſhould ſeem that he gave them needleſs occaſion of offence. I know a learned perſon who takes the proper ſenſe of thoſe words, *Abraham ſaw my day*, to be this; Abraham ſaw me, ſaw my perſon, as the Jews underſtood him; this he confirmed by another ſaying of Chriſt to his diſciples; *Ye ſhall wiſh to ſee one of the days of the ſon of man, i. e.* ſee the ſon of man in perſon preſent among you. I do not inſiſt on this. But I muſt ſay, it ſeems to me a very odd anſwer to the objection of the Jews, againſt what he had ſaid, to tell them that God had a regard to him, in his purpoſe and decree before Abraham had a being; might not any good man ſay as much.

I will give you another text, where the expreſſions ſeem to me as clear, and full, and direct to the purpoſe, as one could wiſh. John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.* I deſire you would read the words in the original. Is not coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world, as plainly literal, as his leaving the world and going

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ing to the Father [πάλιν ἀφίημι] as plainly literal, as his coming again to them, after that he had been with the Father, which he often promiſes?

John xvii. 5. ſeems no leſs plain and expreſs. You imagine that, according to the Jews phraſeology, that may very well be underſtood of the glory always deſigned for Chriſt, in the decree and purpoſe of God; but I very much queſtion, whether you can find an expreſſion truly parallel, either in the Old Teſtament, or the New. That in Rev. xiii. 8. of the lamb ſlaid from the foundation of the world, is, I grant, very like, if that were the right conſtruing of the words; but I take the words *from the foundation of the world*, to refer, not to *ſlain*, but to *written*, whoſe names were not written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the lamb that was ſlain. We cannot conclude, that the words ἀπὸ καταβολῆς, muſt refer to σφαγὴν; becauſe, that immediately proceeds, as might be ſhewn, I believe, by innumerable inſtances. And let any one judge, which is the more eaſy, natural thought. Names written in a book from the foundation of the world (whether you underſtand it of their being written all at once, or of their being written ſucceſſively as they came into being, and lived in the world) or a lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, which lamb is ſuppoſed not to have had a being, or however, is known not to have been ſlain till many ages after the beginning of the world. According to the ſenſe you put upon Chriſt's words, one might ſay of all that are ſaved, *They had glory with the Father before*, &c. the beſt text I know of in the New Teſtament, for

for countenancing the elect's being juſtified and glorified from eternity. But how different are the expreſſions, with relation to the happineſs of the ſaints: *Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation. Ye are begotten to a lively hope, to an inheritance, reſerved in heaven for you. Henceforth is laid up for me.*—No where, as I remember, do we meet with any expreſſion like this, their having had glory with God before the world was. I might obſerve, how very proper, I might ſay emphatical, the ſeveral expreſſions are in this addreſs of Chriſt to God, upon our hypotheſis. *I have glorified thee on earth*—what need of ſaying *upon earth*, if he never had a being any where elſe? *Now, Father, glorify me with thyſelf, with the glory which I had,* παρα σοι, *with thee before I came down to this earth, to do the work thou gaveſt me to do here.* This παρα σεαυτω and παρα σοι, ſeem to have a particular force and beauty in this view. In ſhort, I do not ſee how Chriſt could have expreſſed himſelf more clearly, upon this occaſion, ſuppoſing that he really had glory with the Father before he lived upon earth.

But you ſay, "it is plain from the goſpel, "that Chriſt had not the glory he here prays "for, before his nativity, this glory being the "reward of his ſufferings, which he had not till "after his reſurrection." You know one who hath ſpoken of the modeſty of Jeſus, and what if we ſhould take this for an inſtance of his modeſty; and ſo indeed I do. Having finiſhed the work which the Father had given him to do, he doth not immediately demand the full reward;

all he aſks is, the being reſtored to the glory he had left, when he came to do the will of his Father on earth. I am confirmed in taking it thus, by the foregoing expreſſion, which certainly doth not take in the full extent of that power he was to be inveſted with; he mentions only that, which had a direct and immediate connection with his compleating the great deſign of his coming from heaven. As thou haſt given him power *over all fleſh*. That expreſſion certainly falls vaſtly ſhort of what we know he was to be advanced to, even far above all principalities and powers, &c.

I may now proceed to ſome expreſſions of the apoſtles, which do evince, or at leaſt agree beſt with this notion.—That in the ſecond chapter of Phillippians, appears to me direct to this purpoſe. And there you have, I think, an anſwer to the query at the bottom of p. 5. Where is the incarnation of Chriſt repreſented as a part of his humiliation? For I cannot fall in with the ſenſe of the *form of God*, viz. that it was the power of healing, &c. If ſo, he muſt be conceived as being in the form of God, and in the form of a ſervant, at the ſame time; whereas the text plainly ſpeaks of the one, as oppoſite to the other, of his laying aſide the one, εξηκενωσε εαυτον, he emptied himſelf of that, and inſtead thereof, took the form of a ſervant; which form of a ſervant, as I take it, is there repreſented as conſiſting in this very thing, his becoming man; who being in the form of God, did not ſet ſuch a value upon this, as to reſolve to retain it, and affect to be or to appear as God, when he came into

into this world; but was content to give up that, did actually diveſt himſelf of it; taking the form of a ſervant, εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος. He took the form of a ſervant, in his being made in the likeneſs of men. What follows, is a farther account of his humiliation, and a farther degree of it when in the form of a ſervant, being found in faſhion as a man.—Thoſe expreſſions, *being made in the likeneſs of men*, and *being found in faſhion as a man*, how aptly do they ſuit with the notion of his having been a glorious being, before his appearing in fleſh? Much better, I ſhould think, than with the ſuppoſition of his having been nothing but a man born of a woman. I thought Mr. Pierce's account of this paſſage very juſt and clear. But I have not his paraphraſe here.

Beſides all this, I do not ſee how Chriſt ſhould be repreſented as being in the form of God, upon account of his working miracles, or any thing that he did here on earth, however extraordinary, ſince he came only in the character of a meſſenger ſent from God, and acted as ſuch, and expreſsly aſcribes all thoſe extraordinary works to the power of the Father, as atteſting his miſſion. He ſometimes, indeed, ſpeaks of his being in the Father, and the Father in him, and that he and the Father were one. John xiv.—But that the works, in themſelves conſidered, were no direct immediate evidence of this, and that theſe could not conſtitute the form of God, appears in that he tells his diſciples, that they ſhould do greater things than he had done. I might add, he uſes the like expreſſions, with relation to his diſ-

ciples as thoſe before mentioned with relation to himſelf, John xvii. 21, 23. And whenever his enemies invidiouſly put ſuch an interpretation upon what he had ſaid, as if he pretended to be equal with God, or made himſelf God, he diſclaims ſuch pretenſion and confutes them, and aſſumes no other character, at the higheſt, than that of the *Son of God, whom the Father had ſent, and ſanctified, and ſealed*, John v. 23, &c. John x. 33.

Before we diſmiſs this text in Phil. it may be proper to take notice of your objection againſt ſuch a pre-exiſtent ſtate of glory as we ſuppoſe Chriſt to have had, from his receiving ſuch advancement, as is particularly mentioned in this text, as the reward of his obedience. You ſhould think that, according to the notion we have of his former ſtate, there could be no room for advancement or reward. I know not, indeed, whether there was any advancement with reſpect to what we may call the natural perfections of the being; but I can eaſily conceive of an advancement to higher honour and dignity. Whatever he acted before, he acted as the miniſter or inſtrument of God. If the appearances of God, ſpoken of in the Old Teſtament, were by him, as ſome conceive, ſtill he was but the repreſentative of God, and there was no honour or worſhip directly paid to him in perſon. Now he hath the government of the univerſe in his own hands; all the hoſts of heaven, as well as all the ſons of men, muſt pay homage to him. He is now conſidered, not as in a ſtate of ſubjection even to the Father, but as inveſted with ſupreme

preme authority, deputed indeed, but, as it ſhould ſeem, not under direction, neither is he accountable. He is abſolutely intruſted with the ſupreme authority. Pray obſerve thoſe words of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xv. 28. *Then ſhall the ſon himſelf alſo be ſubject.* Now, however glorious the Logos was in himſelf before the incarnation (and the more glorious in this reſpect, the greater the humiliation) whatever might be the perfections of his nature, here is a vaſt difference in the ſtate or condition of the perſon; in the former ſtate he was conſidered only as the miniſter of God, now he is made head over all, receiving homage from the whole univerſe of intelligent beings.

And now you muſt give me leave to retort the difficulty upon your hypotheſis, from this view of the exaltation of Chriſt. And that is, where is the congruity or propriety of ſuch an advancement of a mere man upon account of his obedience and ſufferings; I ſay *ſuch advancement*; for tho' the bountiful God may vaſtly outdo the merits and expectation of creatures in beſtowing rewards, yet, methinks, there ſhould be ſome congruity, and, if the expreſſion may be allowed, ſome decency in making retribution. I ſhould think this man's being in the form of God, according to your notion, ought not to be placed to the account of his merit in ſubmitting to death, that being a privilege conferred upon him, with a view to the qualifying him for the ſervice he was ſent about, viz. the reforming the world by his doctrine. But to paſs that, let him be conſidered as never ſo highly dignified and diſtinguiſhed by the ſpecial favour and pre-

ſence of God; and his life and death of the greateſt benefit to mankind; was it not enough that upon this account he ſhould be ſet at the head of all mankind; what reaſon was there that a mere man, for having done this ſervice to men, ſhould be made head over angels too, and Lord of the whole creation? This, methinks, ſeems to exceed all meaſures of fitneſs. But now, when we conſider this perſon as vaſtly ſuperior to angels in the excellency and perfections of his nature, and under God their maker; that he, having in compliance with the will of God, ſubmitted to be made, for a while, lower than the angels, and given up himſelf to ſuch ſufferings; that after this he ſhould be made head of all, and angels and principalities be made ſubject to him, here, methinks, I ſee the greateſt juſtneſs, the higheſt propriety in ſuch a diſpenſation, whereas ſuch advancement of a mere man ſeems unaccountable.

After what hath been ſaid I need not aſk, which hypotheſis affords the more illuſtrious example of humiliation and condeſcenſion, and of obedience to the will of God. You ſeem fully ſenſible of this, when you object againſt our notion of the humiliation as being too great to be conceived poſſible. Nor need I add, that the ſame conſideration doth alſo highly aggrandiſe the love of Chriſt towards ſinners, and ſets it, according to the repreſentation of the apoſtle before mentioned, beyond all imagination. Nor can I ſee any pretence for ſuggeſting that this tends to a leſſening of the love of God, p. 15. In my apprehenſion it gives a much more illuſtrious diſplay of it. The conſent of Chriſt, his voluntarily

voluntarily yielding himſelf, is ſuppoſed and allowed by you as well as by us (otherwiſe, indeed, this could be no inſtance of his love) but the propoſal is allowed by us as well as by you to come from the Father, yea, he enjoined it; *This commandment*, ſays Chriſt, *have I received of my Father:* When he cometh into the world, he ſaith, *Lo I come, to do thy will, O God.* There was a free conſent on his part, and the moſt generous love and pity to men (which you alſo allow) and this was highly pleaſing to God, *Therefore doth the Father love me, becauſe I laid down my life.* His giving himſelf doth not interfere with God's giving him in our hypotheſis, any more than it doth in yours. And as love and pity in the perſon himſelf appears to vaſtly greater advantage, when we conſider him in ſo glorious and happy ſtate before he ſubmitted to ſuffering and death; ſo God's giving up one ſo glorious in himſelf, ſo dear to him, to ſuch humiliation and ſufferings upon our account, *i. e.* (requiring him to undergo this for our ſalvation) gives us a view of God's love to us, far exceeding what we have in conſidering God only as forming a mere man, and giving him up for us.

I began to think it was time to quit this head; but there is one or two things more urged by you relating to this point, which I think I had as good take notice of here, and then I ſhall have done with it. It ſeems ſtrange to you, that if the caſe were as we repreſent it, this ſhould be no more frequently and particularly inſiſted on in the New Teſtament. In the text we have laſt conſidered, Phil. ii. where the apoſtle is

recommending, with the greateſt concern, condeſcenſion and goodneſs, you ſee this matter (according to my ſenſe of the words) particularly drawn out, and a lively repreſentation of it, to excite to an imitation in our ſphere. That in many other places it is not ſo expreſsly taken notice of and enlarged upon, may not, perhaps, be ſo difficult to account for. We may conclude that ſuch as had been for ſome time inſtructed in the religion of Jeſus, knew very well the dignity of his perſon; and therefore it is to be ſuppoſed that this would naturally occur to their thoughts upon the mention of him; they knew very well who and what he was who did all this for them; juſt as when we ſpeak of God's having done any thing for us, we do not enter into a particular deſcription of his excellencies and perfections, which might ſerve to enhance our idea of his great goodneſs, condeſcenſion, &c. The name of God is ſuppoſed to carry theſe ideas; ſo the name of Chriſt among chriſtians. But you obſerve, that there is no notice taken of this in the apoſtle's preaching Chriſt to Jews or Gentiles. So neither is there of his miraculous conception, or of his being the only begotten ſon of God. Their great buſineſs in firſt preaching Chriſt, was to convince men of his being ſent from God, and with reſpect to the Jews particularly, of being the Meſſiah. For this purpoſe it was enough to inſiſt on what was known and viſible, as atteſtations of his divine miſſion, or the characters of the Meſſiah ſpecified in the prophets. When any became chriſtians, they were gradually to be let into a more particular knowledge of Chriſt,

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and of his doctrines, growing in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, and endeavouring to comprehend more and more of the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and to know more of the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge.

Whether the Jews at that time had the notion of the pre-exiſtence of the ſoul of the Meſſiah, I cannot ſay. I think they have had ſuch a notion among them in later times, and ſpeak great things concerning it. But you can give a better account of theſe matters than I can do. By the diſciples queſtion, *Hath this man ſinned, that he was born blind?* it ſeems as if the notion of all ſouls' pre-exiſtence was then common among them.

I think I have taken notice of all the particulars you had to object againſt our account, of the pre-exiſtent ſtate of Chriſt.

I had hinted, that there are ſome paſſages, which, though they may not be reckoned evident direct proofs of this point, yet ſeem to intimate, that the writers had this notion. Let me give you ſome inſtances, where the expreſſions do ſeem to me to comport, better with this than with your ſuppoſition. Such is that of Paul, Rom. i. concerning his ſon, τȣ γενομενȣ, of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh, declared to be the Son of God according to the ſpirit of holineſs. What need of that diſtinction, *according to the fleſh*, which alſo ſeems to be expreſſed with a particular emphaſis, chap. ix. *Of whom Chriſt came,* το κατα σαρκα, *as to that which concerns the fleſh*; what need, I ſay, of ſuch a diſtinction or limitation, as it ſeems to be, if he had

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no being but in fleſh. In the text now under conſideration, Rom. i. the κατα πνευμα αγιον, ſeems to be oppoſed to the κατα σαρμα, according to the latter he was of the ſeed of David; according to the former (the ſpirit of holineſs which inhabited the fleſh) he was the Son of God. Do we meet with ſuch an expreſſion concerning any other deſcendant of David, or of any other man? We have, I think, mention made of the ſeed of Abraham, according to the fleſh; but that is, by way of diſtinction, from another kind of ſeed, the ſpiritual ſeed. But where there is nothing ſpoken of or intended, but natural deſcent, ſuch an expreſſion would ſeem needleſs and unaccountable, in the common caſe of men's deſcending from their progenitors. Of like nature is that expreſſion, Gal. iv. *God ſent forth his ſon, born of a woman.* What occaſion for ſaying, God ſent him, *born of a woman*, if he then received his being when he was born, and was never deemed to be any thing but a mere man? was ever ſuch expreſſion uſed concerning any other prophet or meſſenger, "God ſent ſuch a one, born of a woman?" But how appoſite are the words, if we ſuppoſe this Son of God to have had a glorious being in a former ſtate, εξαπεσταλε τη υιον αντε γενομενον εκ γυναικος. I might give another inſtance to this purpoſe, from Col. i. 20. *By him to reconcile all things, having made peace,* δια τε σωματος της σαρκος αυτε. How apt is ſuch an expreſſion, after the account we have in that chapter, of his glorious exiſtence before his incarnation, (which account we may have occaſion to conſider more particularly by

by and by.) The account that is given of his taking fleſh, in the Epiſt. to the Hebrews, carries the ſame face; *as the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, i. e.* by natural conſtitution. *He himſelf alſo, in like manner,* μετεσχε (a different word, which ſeems to denote a voluntary act) *he partook of the ſame, that by death, &c.* He partook of fleſh and blood, and ſo became capable of taſting death. And though επιλαμβανεται, v. 16. may not intend, as our tranſlation hath it, taking upon him the nature of angels, yet it implies a voluntary act, he takes hold of the ſeed of Abraham, in order to help them; and for this purpoſe it was requiſite, that he ſhould be made in all things like unto his brethren, *i. e.* in partaking of fleſh and blood (of which before) and alſo in being tempted as they are tempted.

I might alſo refer you to chapter viii. 3. *For every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices, wherefore it was neceſſary that this high prieſt ſhould have ſomewhat to offer, i. e.* ſhould have a body, which is more than once ſpoken of in this epiſtle, as the offering and ſacrifice which he preſented unto God.

But that paſſage in chapter x. verſe 5, ſeems very expreſs. Wherefore, ερχομενος coming into the world, he ſaith, *Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me. Lo I come, to do thy will, O God.* You will perhaps ſuppoſe this to be figurative only, and poetical. But I ſee no reaſon for departing from the literal ſenſe, and why we ſhould not take

take it as a real natural repreſentation of the fact. And that is too plain to need any comment.

Some expreſſions in St. John's epiſtle may be taken notice of, when we come to ſpeak of the Logos.

Before I enter upon the conſideration of what you offer upon the head of Chriſt's deity, I would take ſome notice of the opinion of Chriſt's appearing to the patriarchs, which you impute to the Pythagoriſm and Platoniſm of the fathers. I do not know of any direct proof of this in the New Teſtament, but ſome paſſages there are, which may ſeem to refer to this, or at leaſt, may very well agree with it, and ſo may be thought to give ſome countenance to the notion. As when St. John ſays, Eſaias ſaw his glory, referring to the viſion in the ſixth chapter of Iſaiah. His being in the form of God, may be underſtood in this ſenſe. It is expreſsly ſaid, that no man hath ſeen God, yet we read frequently in the Old Teſtament, of God's appearing. It is particularly ſaid of the elders, at mount Sinai, that *they ſaw the God of Iſrael, and under his feet.* Now if we conceive, that the Logos appeared as repreſenting God, or (if you will allow the expreſſion) as perſonating God, may not this fitly be termed, *being in the form of God.* And if ſo, may not απαυγασμα της δοξης and χαρακτηρ, be meant of the ſame appearances. There is one paſſage in the Old Teſtament, which I have ſometimes thought might be taken as a hint of this, it is in Pſalm lxviii. *The chariots of God are twenty thouſand, the Lord is among them as at mount Sinai*; then follow the words,

words, *Thou haſt aſcended up on high.* Is not the perſon to whom he addreſſes, *Thou haſt aſcended, &c.* the Lord ſpoken of before, who hath not there the name Jehovah, and if ſo is diſtinguiſhed from the Lord God ſpoken of afterwards. This ſuppoſition ſeems to you inconſiſtent with the apoſtle's argument, Heb. ii. 2. But it is to be conſidered, the apoſtle is there ſpeaking of the meſſenger, or of the perſon coming from God to deliver his word. It is certain, as to the original authority, both diſpenſations were equal, they were both from God. Now if the Logos appeared at mount Sinai, he came not as a meſſenger to deliver the law from God, but as repreſenting God himſelf, who, according to Moſes's account, was conceived to be preſent there, in a glorious ſenſible manner. The perſons then made uſe of in delivering the word, were angels, here the Son himſelf is the meſſenger, he comes from God to deliver the goſpel; ſo runs the oppoſition, the word was then ſpoken by angels, this great ſalvation was firſt ſpoken by the Lord himſelf. The compariſon is manifeſtly with reſpect to the dignity of the perſons employed as meſſengers, or miniſters in delivering the word of God; and the ſuppoſition of our Lord's being at mount Sinai, as the repreſentative of God, doth not, I think, ſuperſede the compariſon; nay, rather, doth it not add weight to it, and more fully anſwer his purpoſe? He who then appeared in the form of God, when that word was ſpoken by angels, is himſelf the meſſenger of God in this laſt diſpenſation.

I now

I now proceed to the ſecond point, the deity of Chriſt. Your ſecond ſcheme mentioned under this head, and what you quote from the Chalcedonian creed, I take to be orthodox. Your explication of the beginning of St. John's goſpel, doth not ſatisfy me. I agree with you, that in the ſentence, και θεος ην—ο λογος is the ſubject, and there is a gradation, but I can by no means take in your ſenſe of the words, viz. that θεος is the ſame with ὁ θεος mentioned before. Why then ſhould he not have ſaid, και ο λογος ην ο θεος, in the ſame manner as he ſays, v. 4. και η ζωη ην το φως, and again, v. 8. he was not το φως. And I am ſo far from thinking, that all which follows makes for your interpretation, that it appears to me ſtrong againſt it. I am ſorry you did not give a ſenſe of that paſſage, ην προς τον θεον, for I can put no ſenſe upon it, that ſhould make it tolerably conſiſtent with the Logos, being ο θεος himſelf. You ſay, who ſhould that be, of whom it is ſaid, *all things were made by him*, but God the Father? I ſay, what need of ſaying, *all things were made by him*, when he had ſaid before, that the Logos was God himſelf? Did the Jews need to be told, that ο θεος was the creator of the world? It is obſervable, that the evangeliſt, after he had ſaid, και θεος ην ο λογος, immediately repeats and inculcates what he had ſaid before, and the ſame was προς τον θεον, as it were on purpoſe to obviate the miſunderſtanding the foregoing expreſſion, that none might imagine him to mean that the Logos was God himſelf. A ſtrange ſaying, the Logos was God himſelf, and he was with God. But now ſuppoſing the Logos

Logos a diſtinct perſon from God, the Jews, who knew very well that God was the maker of the world, might fitly be told, that Jeſus, who appeared among them, was the Logos in fleſh, that this Logos was in the beginning with God, and that God made all things by him; this they may be ſuppoſed not to have known before.

You ſay that God was the word, the light, the life, in ſhort, that he is the Logos who was made fleſh. If ſo, we muſt ſay, that the Father was incarnate, and died for us, and as was hinted above, the ſupreme God and a man make one perſon; for the evangeliſt plainly ſpeaks of him, who was the life and the light, and the word, as the perſon who was manifeſted in fleſh, whom their eyes had ſeen and their hands had handled. Compare John, firſt epiſtle, firſt chapter. And Chriſt himſelf ſays, *I am the light of the world*; *I am the life.*—But doth not St. John, both here and in his epiſtle, expreſsly diſtinguiſh this perſon, whom he calls the word, the life from God, even the Father, with whom he was before he was manifeſted to us. *He was with God*; *in him was life*; *he came into the world*; *the Logos was made fleſh, and we beheld his glory*; whoſe glory? the glory of the Logos in fleſh, *as the glory of the only begotten,* παρα πατρος, not as the glory of the Father himſelf. And again afterwards, this only begotten *was in the boſom of the Father, and hath declared him to us.* And ſo in the epiſtle, *that which we have ſeen with our eyes, &c. declare we unto you: for the life was manifeſted, and we declare unto you the eternal life which was* προς τον πατερα, and

was

was manifeſted unto us, that ye may have fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

Paul's diſcourſe in the firſt chapter of Col. may farther illuſtrate and prove this, viz. that he who was in the beginning with God, and by whom all things were made, is one diſtinct from God. He is there expreſsly ſpeaking of the Son of God, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, who is,* ſays he, *the image of the inviſible God, the firſt born of every creature; for by him were all things created.* Why ſhould not this be underſtood of the original creation, as well as that in John. The expreſſions are as ſtrong; εν αρχη, lead you to underſtand it ſo there; πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως is, with me, of full as great weight to determine this to be the ſenſe here. What he ſays afterwards of the ſame perſon, as *being the firſt born from the dead,* appears to me to be plainly a diſtinct matter, and conſequential to the other; having given account of what he was originally, he farther ſhews what he is now particularly with reference to the church. *And he is the head of the body the church, being the beginning, the firſt born from the dead, that in all things* (in this reſpect, as well as with reſpect to the matters before-mentioned) *he might have the pre-eminence: Becauſe it was the good pleaſure of God, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell.*

Now if the creation here ſpoken of be the original creation, I need not obſerve to you that it is aſcribed to one who is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from θεος, one who is the image of the inviſible God, unto one who roſe from the dead,

dead, &c. And if this be the apoſtle's ſenſe in this place, as well as St. John's in his goſpel, I ſee no manner of reaſon why we ſhould not underſtand the words, Heb. i. *By whom he made the worlds*, in the ſame ſenſe (αιωνες, is uſed in this ſenſe in the ſame Epiſtle, chap. xi. 3.) eſpecially ſince, a few verſes after, the author ſcruples not to apply to the ſame perſon that paſſage in Pſal. ci. *Thou, Lord, haſt laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* And certainly the perſon he is ſpeaking of in this chapter is not God himſelf, but he by whom God ſpeaks, &c. Upon the whole, it ſeems abundantly evident to me, that Chriſt, in his higheſt capacity, and under the higheſt titles, and particularly as the Logos in chap. i. of John's goſpel, is ſpoken of and repreſented as one diſtinct from God.

And indeed to make God and Chriſt one perſon, or the title of God, or the like, when attributed to Chriſt, to intend the Father dwelling in him, is, in my apprehenſion, to introduce the utmoſt confuſion into the goſpel account of our Saviour. You ſeem to be greatly offended at the title of God being given to Chriſt in an inferior ſenſe; the admitting an inferior God, is, in your apprehenſion, a manifeſt abſurdity. But, I pray, is not this title given to him at the very ſame time that he is ſpoken of as having one above him, who is expreſsly called *his God: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; for God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.* We are uſed generally to affix to the word *God*, the notion of abſolute ſupremacy; in that ſenſe an inferior God is an abſurdity. But the term *God* was uſed,

as is well known, both by Jews and Heathens, in a ſubordinate ſenſe. To them certainly there could be nothing ſhocking in it. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, &c. Might it not ſeem as ſtrange that there ſhould be an inferior object of worſhip? Yet I think nothing can be more evident (to me it is as plain as that one and one make two) that, according to the New Teſtament, there is a worſhip to Chriſt diſtinct from the worſhip paid to the ſupreme God and Father, a worſhip paid to him which cannot be given to the Father.

You ſay, "Would any Jew aſcribe the cre-"ation of the World to any but God?" No; but St. John might inform them that God made the world by him who had now appeared in fleſh. You aſk farther, "Whoſe people were "the Jews, were they not God's?" True; but were they not alſo to be the Meſſiah's people when he ſhould come. Where is the impropriety in ſaying, *Chriſt came to his own* (underſtanding it of the Jews?) To ſay nothing of his being related to them, as being of the ſtock of Abraham, (which alone gives occaſion ſometimes to ſuch ſort of expreſſions) did not they know and acknowledge that the Meſſiah was to be their king. You may remember the exclamation of Nathanael, *Thou art the ſon of God, thou art the king of Iſrael.* You lay mighty ſtreſs upon Chriſt's declaring ſo frequently, that *the Father was in him, and that it was the Father who did the works, &c.* No doubt it was very proper it ſhould be ſo. Chriſt appeared and acted as the meſſenger of God, and in the ſtate of humiliation

miliation was, perhaps, diveſted of the native inherent power he had before, (you will excuſe the expreſſion, I hope, and bear with the ſuppoſition.) It was by the power of the Father, and his ſpirit communicated to him, that the works were wrought; though, as I conceive, he had this power at his command, *i. e.* God was ready to exert it upon every occaſion in which Chriſt ſhould ſee fit to apply to him for it. *Father, I know that thou heareſt me always.* I do not ſee any thing in this that interferes with our hypotheſis; it ſhould ſeem rather not ſo well to agree with yours. If the Father himſelf be the Logos that was made fleſh, and tabernacled among us, and was the Chriſt, what occaſion was there, what room could there be for Chriſt's addreſſing to his Father in heaven. Nor doth his ſay, *He that hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father*, deſtroy our notion of the Logos. He was the moſt lively image and repreſentation of the Father; in him was the cleareſt manifeſtation of God that we could, or at leaſt that was fit for us to have in this preſent ſtate. Certainly he did not mean that he himſelf was the Father, or that he and the Father were one and the ſame perſon. Upon the ſame account he might fitly be called Immanuel, becauſe God did moſt eminently manifeſt himſelf, particularly his grace and love, in and by him. We read of a city whoſe name was to be Jehovah Shamma.

I ſhall now conſider ſome particular texts which you have remarked upon. I have no commentators by me, nor Dr. Clark's *Scripture Doctrine*, nor have I a memory to retain the particular

interpretations I may have met with; ſo that I can only give you my own thoughts as things appear to me in reading the New Teſtament.

Heb. i. 2. &c. *The brightneſs of his glory*, &c. I rather incline to take theſe as belonging to the character of the Son of God, before he took fleſh. If there had been no account elſewhere of Chriſt's pre-exiſtent ſtate, I cannot ſay that I ſhould have concluded it from hence; but ſince that is plain to me from other ſcriptures, and, as I think, is ſpoken of in this epiſtle, the expreſſions ſeem to me moſt naturally to ſuit with that ſtate. I have offered ſome reaſons why I underſtand the words, *By whom he made the worlds*, of the original creation, I add, this ſeems very appoſitely to come in here, as intimating a fitneſs in his being appointed heir of all things. Now if that be meant of the original creation, the things which follow ſeem moſt naturally to belong to him in the ſtate he was in before his coming in fleſh. Indeed I do not ſee how it could be ſaid of the man Chriſt, while he was on earth, that he upheld all things by the word of God's power. The author ſeems willing to give us, in one view, a ſummary deſcription of this perſon by whom God now ſpeaks to us. He tells us what he was in his original ſtate, what he did for us here on earth, and what his preſent ſtate is.

In ver. 5. there is no evading the title of God being given to the Son as diſtinguiſhed from God, *even his God who anointed him.* I will not be poſitive that the title of Son belongs to Chriſt, previouſly to his being born of a woman.

man. Though I own that ſeems to be the moſt natural ſenſe of ſeveral paſſages, viz. to take it as belonging to him in his original ſtate. *The only begotten Son who was in the boſom of the Father; God ſent his Son into the world.* And in this chapter God hath ſpoken *by his Son whom he appointed, by whom he made the worlds.* In theſe and the like paſſages, he ſeems to be repreſented as having that title or character in the ſtate there ſpoken of, *i. e. when he was in the boſom of the Father, before his coming into the world, when God made the worlds by him.* And methinks the title is very properly given to him, according to the notion I have of his original ſtate. For if angels are called the ſons of God, and Adam is called the ſon of God, and he is ſtiled the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh, he who was firſt and immediately derived from God, who was the expreſs image of his perſon or ſubſtance, may, I ſhould think, very juſtly have the title or character of *the only begotten Son of God.*

I have already ſpoken of the name *Immanuel.* Other texts you mention may refer to God's manifeſting himſelf in and by Chriſt. Nothing of this nature is inconſiſtent, as far as I can perceive, with my notion, concerning the perſon of Chriſt.

As to the appearing of the glory of God, diſtinct from the glory of Chriſt, I cannot be poſitive. Your interpretation of ſeveral paſſages relating to this matter may ſatisfy. But it is obſervable, that Chriſt ſpeaks of the glory of the Father which ſhall attend him at his appearing,

as if it were as diſtinct from his own glory as that of the angels is, *The ſon of man ſhall come in his own glory, in the Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels.* Luke. And whereas God is ſaid to have his throne in the heavens, and is characteriſed as *He that ſitteth upon the throne*, and Chriſt is repreſented as *ſitting on the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. I ſee no abſurdity in ſuppoſing a manifeſtation of the glory of God at the appearing of Chriſt. The text you mention, Titus ii. 13. runs thus; The appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

I ſuppoſe Juſtin Martyr would not deny that it was the ſupreme God who gave the law, and was the God of the Jews, &c. But he ſuppoſes that he who appeared upon all occaſions was the Son. I think his diſcourſes upon this head, and, indeed, moſt of the Fathers, as far as I remember, are very confuſed. However, I think it is undeniable, that he believed the Son to be a diſtinct being from the ſupreme God and Father. I mean the Son in his higheſt capacity, and as God.

Col. i. 15. *The image of the inviſible God*, was ſo before the incarnation, and while on earth, and will always be ſo. Col. iii. 3—9. ſuit as well with my notion as with yours,

Thus I have given you my thoughts upon theſe matters with all freedom. If I have been tedious in ſome things, you muſt excuſe it. I endeavour to find out truth for myſelf, but when I think I am never ſo clear in my own mind, I have little hope of being able to ſet things in

ſuch

ſuch a light as to convince others, who are got into another way of thinking. However, this I am ſatisfied of, that if there be any force in what I have ſaid, PHILALETHES will perceive it as ſoon as any man, and be as ready to yield to it.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

The following verſion of the 139*th pſalm, with the remarks and paraphraſe accompanying it, I received from a worthy friend, who gave me leave to communicate the whole to you for publication, if you think it may be acceptable to your readers. He is of opinion, that there are many paſſages in the Old Teſtament, beſides thoſe commonly noted, which have a real reference to the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, as might be made to appear, if they were exactly tranſlated, and compared with other texts, where the like terms and phraſes occur in the original. It was with a particular view of pointing out an inſtance or two of this kind, that he drew up what I now ſend you. In the verſion, he profeſſes to have attended to the original with care. The remarks might have been more numerous; but he thought theſe ſufficient for his purpoſe. For the free tranſlation or paraphraſe, intended to ſet the whole compoſition, in a more eaſy, ſtriking and popular light, he apologiſes, as not having been able to pleaſe himſelf, and wiſhes it might be im-*

proved; however, I have not ventured to make any material alteration.

I am, gentlemen,

Your humble ſervant,

A. O. C.

THE 139th pſalm, being a ſolemn addreſs to Jehovah (compoſed when the author appears to have lain under the imputation of criminal actions or deſigns, from which he was deſirous to clear himſelf) may admit of the following diviſions. The Pſalmiſt, 1. expreſſes the ſtrongeſt conviction, that his own character and conduct was perfectly known to God. From whence he takes occaſion, 2. to repreſent the knowledge, power and care of the Deity, as of the moſt univerſal and unlimited extent. He then more particularly reflects, 3. on the wonderful diſplays of the divine wiſdom, in the firſt contrivance and compoſition of his frame; 4. on the innumerable bleſſings with which he had been favoured, by a kind providence, through all his life; and 5. on the ſtill greater bleſſings he hoped to enjoy, in the bliſsful preſence of God for ever, from whence the wicked ſhould be driven into utter deſtruction; after which he concludes, 6. with a ſolemn appeal and prayer, to this all-knowing God, for the trial and proof of his innocence and integrity.

1. God's perfect knowledge of the Pſalmiſt's character and conduct, ſtrongly aſſerted, v. 1. *O Lord, thou haſt ſearched and known me.* 2. *Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting, and mine up-riſing: Thou underſtandeſt*

ſtandeſt my good thoughts of old. 3. *Thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, and thou cloſely attendeſt on all my ways.* 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether.* 5. *Thou haſt formed my future and my former ſtate, and laid the palm of thy hand over me. This knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

2. On

REMARKS.

Ver. 2. לרעי, *My good thoughts,* is derived from a root that ſignifies to aſſociate, to be in a regular and friendly manner, united with others. It is the ſame word which is applied to God, ver. 17. which doubtleſs denotes his thoughts of love. Whereas שרעפי, the thoughts mentioned, ver. 23. are thoſe which are divided, ſcattered, diſcompoſed, or diſtracted about various objects; alluding to boughs torn from a tree, or to the ſplitting of a rock, or to the droſſy mixture which muſt be ſeparated from the pure metal, by the refiner.

Ibid. מרחוק, *Of old,* ſeems to reſpect the preceding part of life. In this ſenſe it is uſed in Iſaiah xxii. 11. and tranſlated long ago. Compare Iſaiah xxv. 1. xxxvii. 26. xlii. 10, &c.

Verſe 5. אחור, *My future ſtate.* Compare Iſaiah xli. 23. xliii. 10. xliv. 6, &c. קדם, *my former ſtate.* This word denotes the preceding time, Pſalm lxviii. 33. Iſaiah xxiii. 7. xlv. 21. li. 9. xliv. 6. Jer. xxx. 20. xlvi. 26. Hab. i. 20, &c. In the verſion of the ſeventy, it is

2. On the unlimited extent of the divine knowledge, power and care. Ver. 7. *Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? And whither ſhall I flee from thy face?* 8. *If I mount aloft into heaven, thou art there: If I make* Hades *my couch; behold, thou art there.* 9. *Shall I take the wings of the morning? Shall I dwell in the moſt diſtant parts of the ſea?* 10. *Even there thy hand ſhall guide me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.* 11. *If I ſay,*

REMARKS.

Τα εσχαΐα και τα αρχαια συ επλασας. We have a ſentiment ſimilar to this in Soph. Ajax, v. 34. Where Ulyſſes is introduced as ſaying to the goddeſs of wiſdom,

——— παντα γαρ τα τ'ουν παρος
Τα τ εισεπειτα, ση κυβορνωμαι χερι.

Ver. 8. *The wings of the morning.* The Latin poets aſſign a chariot to Aurora. Thus Virg. Æn. 6. 355.——Roſeis Aurora quadrigis. And again, 7. 26. Aurora in roſeis, fulgebat lutea bigis. Buchanan, in his elegant verſion, uſes here the ſame image:

Aurora curru me volucri ut deferat,
Ad occidentis limitem,
Hic deprehendas me.

But the repreſentation of the rays of the morning, under the figure of a chariot running ever ſo faſt, ſeems much leſs beautiful and ſignificant, than that of flight by means of wings. And it may be ſaid in truth, what Homer feigns of the chariot of his deity, that every jump or ſpring was of equal extent with the world.

ſay, Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me, even the night ſhall be light about me. 12. *Yea, the darkneſs, by its denſe gloom, concealeth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day, darkneſs and light are juſt the ſame to thee.*

3. On the wonderful diſplay of divine wiſdom, in contriving and adjuſting the human frame, ver. 13. *Thou art the poſſeſſor of my reins; thou haſt covered me in my mother's womb.* 14. *I will praiſe thee, for my excellent and awfully aſtoniſhing formation. Marvellous are thy works, and of that my ſoul is truly ſenſible.* 15. *My body was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret; and curiouſly wrought as embroidery, in the deep receſſes of the earth.* 16. *Thine eyes did ſee my unformed maſs; and in thy regiſter all the members were delineated: Day unto day they were moulded into form; and not one of them was wanting.*

4. On the bleſſings of this life, which a kind providence liberally beſtows. Ver. 17. *How precious alſo are thy thoughts of love to me, O God; How great is the ſum of them.* 18. *If I would count them, they are more in number than the ſand.*

5. On the future ſtate of good and bad men. Ver. 18. *When I awake I ſhall be ſtill with thee.* 19. *Surely, O righteous God, thou wilt ſlay the wicked, and the men of blood, by ſaying, Depart from me.* 20. *When they ſhall have given an account of their wickedneſs unto thee, every one of thine enemies ſhall be borne away into deſtruction.*

6. The Pſalmiſt's ſolemn appeal and prayer to the all-knowing God, for the proof of his innocence

innocence and integrity. Ver. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.* 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts:* 24. *And ſee if there be any way of grief in me; and lead me in the everlaſting way.*

REMARKS.

Ver. 18. הקיצתי, *I awake*, or *ſhall awake*. The preterite tenſe is often uſed for the future. That this word is frequently applied to awaking from the ſleep of death, appears from 2 Kings iv. 31. *The child is not made to awake.* Pſalm xvii. 15. *I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.* Compare Dan. xii. 2.

Ver. 20. ימוך, *When they ſhall have given an account*, or *confeſſed unto thee.* This word is uſed in ſolemn tranſactions, as in Deut. xxvi. 18. *hath avouched thee.* Pſal. viii. 2, &c.

Ib. למומה, Abominationem, *their wickedneſs.* The word ſeems to denote wickedneſs ſo ingrained as to be incurable; and exhibits to view the reprobate ſtate.

Ib. נשוא, Every one of thy enemies *ſhall be borne away.* This word ſeems to be a regular participle ſingular, not an anomalous preterite plural; and admits the ſenſe given in the tranſlation.

Ib. לשוא, *Into deſtruction.* The ſeventy has it, ληφονται εις ματαιότητα, *Shall be reduced into emptineſs*, or *utterly deſtroyed.* Compare Iſa. xxx. 28. *Sift the nations with a ſieve of vanity.*

Ver.

Ver. 23. בחנני, *Try me.* This word properly reſpects one who makes experiments on any thing to render it better. *Proprie dicitur de eo qui experitur aliquid ut melius reddat.* Bythner. Analyſ. in Pſal. xi. 5.

Ver. 24. עצב, *Way of grief.* This word denotes any thing irritating, quite offenſive, troubleſome, greatly afflicting and grieving, as an idol was to thoſe who were truly pious. It is derived from a root that ſignifies tying any thing very hard. It ſeems here to denote any thing inconſiſtent with the worſhip and obedience due to Jehovah.

A free Tranſlation, or Paraphraſe, humbly attempted.

1. *Men's Character and Conduct perfectly known to God.*

O Lord, thou haſt examined, as by the narroweſt ſurvey, whatever is in me, and haſt the moſt intimate and perfect knowledge of me. Thou knoweſt my eaſe and my toil, my ſeaſons of reſt and of labour; and art thoroughly acquainted with the good principles with which my heart has been ſwayed, from the beginning of my life. The meaſures I take in the walks of public action, and the ſatisfaction and ſolace which I enjoy in my hours of ſecret repoſe, are limited by thee, *are under thy direction*, and thou cloſely attendeſt to all the circumſtances of my lot. For all the expreſſions of my tongue (which is then alone my glory, when employed to thy honour, or to ſome beneficial purpoſes) are, O Lord, (even before I utter them) entirely known

known to thee. My future ſtate, as well as the preceding, is alſo the ſubject of thine all-ſeeing and diſpoſing providence; and thy inviſible agency is ever converſant about me, to guide, ſuſtain and protect me. This knowledge is too wonderful for me; of too vaſt an extent to come within the ſphere of my comprehenſion; and of ſuch height as exceeds the utmoſt reach of my limited capacity, and ſurpaſſes all my conceptions.

2. *The unlimited Extent of the Divine Knowledge, Power and Care.*

To what place can I have recourſe where thy ſpirit doth not penetrate? Or whither ſhall I take my flight to be out of thy view? Should I mount aloft to heaven, thou art there, ſhining *with peculiar eminence*, amidſt the ſplendors of thy throne. Should I make Hades, *the region of departed ſpirits*, my couch, and thereby expect a perfect and undiſturbed repoſe.--It is an amazing conſideration! Thou art even there. Were it poſſible for me to perch on the wings of the morning, the rays of the riſing ſun; or darting ſwiftly from thence, to fix my reſidence in the furthermoſt part of the ocean, behind the weſtern ſea; even there thy immediate agency would be felt; and there I ſhould ſtill need and experience the hand of thy providence to direct and ſupport me. Again, ſhould I feign to myſelf, that ſurely the groſs darkneſs would ſhrowd me from thy ſight, and keep my quite concealed.—But I check the ſenſeleſs fiction. For to thy view, the night is like bright ſun-ſhine round about me.

me. Yea the darkeſt gloom is no obſcurity to thee; but the night is radiant as the day. Darkneſs and light are altogether the ſame to thee.

3. *Divine Wiſdom wonderfully diſplayed in the Formation of man.*

Thou art, indeed, the rightful proprietor and poſſeſſor of my internal faculties; and thou didſt wrap me in that cloathing with which I was arrayed in my mother's womb. I will praiſe thee on account of my original production; and with aweful reverence and aſtoniſhment admire the power and wiſdom diſplayed therein. Full of wonder are thy works, and my ſoul exceedingly aſpires after the knowledge of them. My material part, in its firſt formation, though veiled from every other eye, was not concealed from thee, when it was curiouſly wrought, as a piece of the fineſt embroidery, in no leſs ſecrecy than if it had been in the deepeſt receſſes of the earth. Even then thine eyes did ſee me, while I was a mere embryo; and in thy regiſter were recorded all the parts of my compoſition, almoſt infinite in number, variety and uſe; which in ſucceſſive days were gradually expanded, and regularly adjuſted; and not one of them omitted, or left imperfect.

4. *The Mercies of God innumerable in the preſent Life.*

When I further reflect on the gracious diſpenſations of thy providence towards me, and on that ſpring of goodneſs from whence all the comforts

comforts of my life have flowed, my ſoul is filled with the moſt ardent affection and lively gratitude towards thee, the giver of all good. For Oh, how great is the ſum of thoſe bleſſings which thy paternal care has provided for me, and thy bountiful hand beſtowed! In attempting to recollect them, I find them more than can be numbered; for in multitude they exceed the ſands on the ſea-ſhore. But to me, this world, and its enjoyments, will ſoon be no more. I ſhall fall aſleep in death.

5. *On the future State of good and bad Men.*

——I awake, and ſhall be for ever with thee, to *behold thy face*, to *diſcern thy glory*, to be made *like thee*, and *ſatisfied with thy likeneſs*; enjoying complete and endleſs bliſs in the perfect conformity of nature, to thy divine nature and law. Then, O God, as thou art eſſentially righteous, thou wilt put the wicked to death, and command the men of blood, all murderers, and thoſe who hated their brethren, to depart from thee. And when thine enemies ſhall have given an account of their wickedneſs, they ſhall every one of them be deſtroyed with an utter exciſion.

6. *The Pſalmiſt's ſolemn Appeal and Prayer to the Searcher of Hearts.*

Have I not an averſion, O Lord, to thoſe who appear, by their impious conduct, to have an averſion to thee? Am I not greatly diſguſted with thoſe who riſe up in oppoſition to thee? My averſion is fixed and well grounded. They are my

my enemies. They wound my peace, oppreſs my mind with ſorrow, and are prejudicial to truth, righteouſneſs and the happineſs of mankind; whereby thy name is diſhonoured, and they are juſtly rendered the objects of thy diſpleaſure. As to myſelf, I ſubmit to the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Refine, by trial, my diſcompoſed and diſtracted thoughts: Diſcover to me if any of my principles, aims or motives are inconſiſtent with the honour, worſhip and obedience that are due to thee, that they may be duly rectified; and let all my thoughts and ways be ſo directed by the unchangeable rule of truth and righteouſneſs, as to iſſue in everlaſting life and bliſs.

Obſervations on ſome Incidents in the Life of CHRIST.

I. *The Marriage at Cana in Galilee.* John ii.

THE objections to the miracle wrought on this occaſion, appear to have been ſatisfactorily obviated by ſeveral writers. The greatneſs of Chriſt's power is a reflection ſuggeſted by and common to every miracle he performed. On theſe points nothing need be obſerved. But *the manner* in which he diſplayed his power in this inſtance, merits particular notice. So miraculous a proviſion of wine on a ſeaſon of feſtivity, ſets in a pleaſing light, the goodneſs of our Maſter's mind. Notwithſtanding the infinite moment and ſolemnity of his errand into

our world, he is ſo condeſcending and courteous, as to conſult for the ſatisfaction of a ſocial hour; and to afford a liberal ſupply, not only to neceſſary wants, but generouſly to furniſh a delicious regale for the table, and a munificent proviſion of one of the elegant articles of entertainment. He begins his extraordinary miniſtry with an act that was ſuited to exhibit his character in an engaging, agreeable view, and to conciliate the regards of the cheerful. And I know not why we ſhould not learn from it, to conſider our Lord as a friend to our leaſt, as well as beſt intereſt, as no enemy to the innocent gaiety of our ſpirits, and our acquiſition of life's agreeable accommodations; whilſt his chief buſineſs was to bring us acquainted with the things of our everlaſting peace. The liberality with which he furniſhed ſuch excellent wine, adds luſtre to his generoſity and goodneſs; it was a large return for the entertainment of himſelf and his diſciples, an obliging expreſſion of his readineſs to adminiſter to the gratification and pleaſure of the bridegroom and his company; and the remainder, after the feſtival, was no inconſiderable preſent to the new-married couple. The modeſty and humility, with which Jeſus acted on this occaſion, ſhould not eſcape our attention. It appears, that this miracle was wrought with all the privacy poſſible, on ſo publick an occaſion. The bridegroom, the governor of the feaſt, and all the company, were ſtrangers to it; the ſervants only knew what was done: and Jeſus himſelf ſpeaks and ſays nothing about it even to them, but only orders the veſſels to be

filled

filled with water, and that it ſhould be drawn, and carried to the governor of the entertainment.

Here is no parade, no oſtentation to direct the attention of the gueſts to it; it is performed without their knowledge; our Lord makes no reflections on it, and even draws no arguments or concluſion from it, in favour of his miſſion. He knew it would be diſcovered, but does not haſten, or anticipate the diſcovery; and afterwards he leaves it to ſpeak for itſelf, and to convince only by its own weight and evidence. This is not the manner of enthuſiaſts and impoſtors. No! It is peculiar to the Son of God; who did his great works with the ſame eaſe and indifference, as other men perform the moſt common things in life. It was neceſſary his miracles ſhould be public, in order to confirm his miſſion; but then they are performed in as private, as modeſt and ſilent a manner as was conſiſtent with that end. Another thing obſervable in our Lord's conduct, on the preſent occaſion, was his wiſdom in improving the ſocial banquet, for the important purpoſe of ſubſerving the end of his miniſtry. Amidſt the relaxation of the feſtive hour, he does not loſe ſight of the dignity and deſign of his character; and ſeizes the opportunity afforded him by the failure of wine, in a manner not in the leaſt forbidding, but in a way peculiarly engaging and pleaſing, to lead the company into an inquiry about his office and teſtimonials: He endeavours, by aſſiſting the joys of their banquet, to excite their attention and thirſt after the riches and ſpiritual entertainment of his kingdom. He takes care that the

ſocial feſtival ſhould not be loſt to him or them; but ſhould concur, under the energy of his power and goodneſs, with the other more ſolemn ſeaſons of his miniſtry, to manifeſt his glory, and to raiſe the faith of his diſciples.

Once more; this ſcene of our Lord's miniſtry, leads us to remark his great ſelf-denial. The ſame power which ſo exuberantly furniſhed this feaſt, could as eaſily have always changed the repaſt of a common table, into the greateſt delicacies. He could as eaſily have ſupplied his own wants with a continual profuſion of elegant conveniences: He could as eaſily have provided himſelf daily with the dainties of a royal board. It appears from this inſtance, that he had no gloomy averſion, no monkiſh contempt for theſe gratifications, and that he was not indifferent to the entertainment of others. But as for himſelf, he never exerciſed his miraculous powers for ſelf-indulgence: He ſuffered hunger and thirſt, and endured all the ſeverities of a poor and needy ſituation in life. So little did he regard the pleaſures of ſenſe; ſo ardently did he ſeek the nobler gratifications of obedience to God and love to man; a moderation more ſignal and exemplary, when compared with his ability to provide indulgences for every ſenſe.

May I be allowed to ſubjoin to theſe remarks, one of the candid and learned Dr. Jortin:— "There aroſe in the church, from ancient "times, ſects of heretics, who condemned "wine, and the uſe of animal food, and marri-"age; not only heretics, but the orthodox alſo,

"ran

" ran into extravagant notions of the ſame
" kind, crying up celibacy and a ſolitary life
" beyond meaſure, together with rigid and un-
" commanded auſterities and macerations of the
" body. Chriſt, therefore, as we may conjec-
" ture, was preſent at this feaſt and honoured
" it with this miracle, that it ſhould ſtand in
" the goſpel as a confutation of theſe fooliſh
" errors, and a warning to thoſe who had ears
" to hear, not to be deluded by ſuch fanatics.
" St. John, who records this miracle, lived to ſee
" theſe falſe doctrines adopted and propagated."
Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 18.

II. *The Cure of the Centurion's Servant*, Luke vii.

In common with the other miracles, which gave a divine ſanction to the words of Chriſt, the recovery of the Centurion's ſervant from a dangerous ſickneſs by the power of Jeſus, was a notorious and public action; but there are ſome circumſtances peculiar to it, which are utterly inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of any trick, any concerted deſign or fraud. The modeſty and diſtant reſpect with which it was ſolicited, the interceſſion of the moſt conſiderable perſons of the city, and of many of the Centurion's friends, the reputation and weight of his name and character, and the manner in which the cure was effected, without touching, without ſeeing the ſick perſon, only by a word ſpoken at a diſtance from the houſe, are circumſtances which carry the natural air of truth, ſhew the impoſſibility of any intrigue, or deception; and unite to evince the reality and diſplay the

greatneſs of this ſignal and merciful work. It appears from hence, that the preſence of the object contributed not in the leaſt to the ſucceſsful exertion of the power of Jeſus; but his word could reach and prevail for the perfect recovery of the unknown, the abſent and the diſtant. This work proved in a convincing manner, that the high and honourable terms, in which this Roman officer ſpake of the power and authority of Chriſt, were not the dictates of flattery's inſinuating art, nor flowed from the empty hope of an enthuſiaſtical reverence; but were the tokens of a juſt reſpect, and the fruits of a rational faith. The ſtrongeſt and moſt inveterate diſeaſe, yields to the power of his word, whilſt the perſon afflicted by it lies far beyond the ſound of his voice. This miracle was a real and viſible image of the inviſible, but real energy of God: and an encouraging pledge of that power and authority which Chriſt was, through all ages of his kingdom, to exert over all parts of his dominions, over thoſe remote from, as well as thoſe near to the heavenly ſeat of his reſidence. This cure was inferior to none of his mighty works in expreſſing his kind and amiable ſpirit. As performed out of reſpect to the Centurion's ſignal and eminent virtues, it gave encouragement to exemplary goodneſs. As it removed the pains of a ſick *ſervant*, and turned his languor into health and cheerfulneſs, it was an act of great mercy and kindneſs to him. As it was done at the generous and humane ſuit of his maſter, it was the reward of his tenderneſs for his ſick ſervant, and gave a divine ſanction to that inſtructive example of benevolence and

compaſſion

compaſſion in perſons of high rank to thoſe below them, which this behaviour of the Centurion exhibits. When Peter and John would have called down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, to revenge the affront their Maſter had received from thoſe bigotted people, they are rebuked and ſilenced: but when the Centurion intercedes for his afflicted ſervant, he is heard, and his humane requeſt inſtantly granted. The good ſaviour takes a pleaſure to indulge the emotions of pity and mercy in his own breaſt, and to encourage them in others. This inſtance may not improperly be regarded as a token, that his ſentence, when he appears in the character of the final judge, ſhall accompliſh what his kind lips declared, and his compaſſionate miracles exemplified, namely, that *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy.*

III. *Chriſt bleſſes little Children,* Mark x.

There is ſomething peculiarly eaſy and agreeable in the method, by which Chriſt conveyed his ſublime and exalted leſſons. In a multitude of inſtances he waves that air of authority, which well became him; and without any ſet and laboured diſcourſes, as was the practice of other inſtructors, he delivered his doctrine in a moſt familiar manner. The hiſtory before us is an example of this. He takes occaſion, from ſome perſons bringing their children to him to receive his bleſſing, to teach and inculcate humility, and to recommend docility and ſimplicity as eſſential ingredients in the character of his genuine followers. His diſciples thought

children beneath his notice, and their being brought to him an interruption to his preaching. But their maſter, with great modeſty and mildneſs, borrows the aſſiſtance of their preſence to enforce his doctrine, and on the view of their innocent appearance, ingrafts the firſt principles of his religion. Thus he was at once a pattern and teacher of humility. He diſcovered his own gentle and condeſcending ſpirit by the kind notice he took of theſe young children.

Such was his ſympathy with the parents who brought them to him, in their concern for the happineſs of their offspring: Such was his tender love of children, and his readineſs to gratify the affectionate and pious deſires of their friends: Such was his ſenſibility, the ſoft charms and ſmiles of this early and innocent period won upon him, and touched all the ſprings of kindneſs. He had a ſoul too great for the high and ambitious things of life, but ſuſceptible of tender impreſſions from the loweſt degrees of purity and goodneſs. In the language of prophecy, he is deſcribed as that compaſſionate *Shepherd, who ſhould gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his boſom*, Iſaiah xl. 11. In the inſtance before us, he literally accompliſhed this delightful prediction; and afforded us an engaging pledge, that a bruiſed reed he would not break, nor quench the ſmoking flax. May it not be added, that this anecdote in our Saviour's hiſtory, is of importance to our comfort under ſome of the ſevereſt trials a tender heart feels, when it is conſidered in connection with his character, as the Lord of the unſeen world:

world: In this view it is a pleaſing intimation with what kind care he will receive them, in thoſe regions where his power and friendſhip are peculiarly felt; when they are loſt from the parental embrace, and are fallen aſleep, arrayed with thoſe native robes of humility and innocence, which will ever ſweetly attract his love.

A. N.

Obſervations on Prophetic Names.

WE find in ſeveral paſſages of the prophets *ſignificant names* given to perſons and things, not intended to denote any thing particular and peculiar to thoſe perſons, but ſomething of more public and general concernment. They are employed as ſigns, memorials and engagements, to confirm the faith of the people in the prediction or promiſe to which they are annexed, and are formed to expreſs the purport of the prediction, or ſomething conducive to its accompliſhment. *E. G.*

When king Ahaz and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem were in the utmoſt conſternation and deſpondency, on account of the invaſion of their country by the kings of Syria and Iſrael, the ſlaughter of one hundred and twenty thouſand of their beſt troops, and the captivity of two hundred thouſand women and children by the Iſraelites, beſides a great multitude whom the Syrians carried away; (ſee 2 Chron. xxviii. former part) and were under the greateſt apprehenſion

ſion for the ſafety of Jeruſalem itſelf, which was in great danger. The prophet Iſaiah was ſent to encourage them, by foretelling the diſappointment of the deſigns of their enemies, and the utter overthrow both of Syria and Iſrael near approaching. (See Iſa. vii. 1—10.) And he was particularly directed to take with him his ſon *Shear-jaſhub*. The name ſignifies, *A remnant ſhall return*, and ſeems to have been given to the child for the purpoſe of confirming the promiſe of the return of part of the captives which we find in the laſt verſe of the preceding chapter, and which event ſoon took place, 2 Chron. xxviii. 9—15. Hence appears the propriety of the direction given to the prophet to take Shear-jaſhub with him, as his preſence and name would ſerve mightily to give impreſſion and confirmation to the prediction he had in charge to deliver.

About the ſame time the prophet was directed, with particular circumſtances of authenticity and ſolemnity, to regiſter another name, *Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz*, and, upon the birth of another ſon, to give the child that name, as a ſignature and confirmation of this prediction. *Before the child ſhall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother, the riches of Damaſcus, and the ſpoil of Samaria ſhall be taken away before the king of Aſſyria.* Now the name ſignifies, *In making ſpeed to the ſpoil he haſteneth the prey.* Certainly this was not meant to denote any thing relative to the child himſelf, but the irreſiſtible rapidity of the Aſſyrian conqueſts, and the plunder and deſolation which would attend them,

them, chap. viii. 1—4. In like manner when the prophet, at the delivery of the former prediction to Ahaz, propoſed to that prince to chooſe any ſign he pleaſed for the confirmation of it, upon his refuſing to aſk for one, the prophet ſaid, chap. vii. 14. *The Lord himſelf ſhall give you a ſign. Behold a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey ſhall he eat, that he may know to refuſe the evil and chooſe the good. For before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil and chooſe the good, the land which thou abhorreſt ſhall be forſaken of both her kings.* The name *Immanuel* ſignifies *God with us.* But ſurely we are not to underſtand by it, that the child (whoever he was) that ſhould bear it, ſhould be true and very God, dwelling amongſt us; but only that God, by appointing this name, engaged to manifeſt his own preſence with his people, by protecting and bleſſing them, and by inflicting vengeance on their enemies and oppreſſors, agreeably to the prediction to which this name is annexed as a confirming ſign.

St. Matthew, chap. i. 23. very properly applies the words of this prophecy to our Lord Jeſus; but doth it not ſeem much more reaſonable (and conformable to the common uſage of ſcripture, and particularly of prophetic ſignificant names) to underſtand him as referring, by the name *Immanuel* to the wonderful diſplays which God made of his own power, wiſdom and goodneſs, in and by Jeſus Chriſt, and to that diſpenſation of grace, mercy and peace, which he hath eſtabliſhed by him, and extended even to the Gentiles,

Gentiles, agreeably to that prophecy to which St. Paul refers, and which he applies to the Gentile converts at Corinth, (2 Cor. vi. 16.) *Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.* I ſay, doth not this ſeem a more reaſonable and probable interpretation of the name Immanuel, as applied to Jeſus Chriſt, than to imagine that we muſt underſtand by it, that Jeſus, as the ſon of God, is truly, verily and properly God, of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father, and equal to him in all divine perfections.

Another paſſage containing a prophetic ſignificant name, which divines have commonly underſtood to denote our Lord Jeſus (though I do not recollect any paſſage of the New Teſtament, where any apoſtle or evangeliſt makes ſuch application of it) is Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will raiſe unto David a righteous Branch, and a King ſhall reign and proſper, and ſhall execute judgment and juſtice in the earth; and in his days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely; and this is his name whereby he ſhall be called,* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now admitting that this prophecy and this name Jehovah צדקנו, *the Lord our Righteouſneſs,* are rightly underſtood of our Lord Jeſus, doth it not ſeem more reaſonable to interpret it as expreſſive of that free pardon and juſtification of penitent ſinners, through the riches of his own mercy and goodneſs, which Jehovah hath publiſhed to the world by his ſon, and that ſtate of grace or favour

vour with him, into which we are received by the goſpel; or, to borrow a better illuſtration of the import of this name, from the words of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them:* I ſay, doth not this ſeem a more reaſonable interpretation of this name, than to ſuppoſe it to import, that the active and paſſive merits of Chriſt (or his obedience and ſufferings) imputed to us, procure our juſtification or righteouſneſs in the ſight of God, and that Chriſt himſelf is here ſtiled Jehovah.

But that (whatever may become of the doctrine) this is not the meaning of the name, appears to me very plain, from chap. xxxiii. ver. 15, 16. where the ſame prophecy is repeated, and the ſame name is expreſsly applied to Jeruſalem.—*This is the name wherewith* SHE *ſhall be called, The Lord our Righteouſneſs.* Now I preſume no Proteſtant will think of the imputation of the merits of Jeruſalem (whether we underſtand it of that particular city, or of the church in general) to any one for righteouſneſs, or juſtification before God; and what right have we to interpret the ſame name, one way in one place, and differently in another? Whereas, in the ſenſe given of it above, the name is very applicable both to Chriſt and Jeruſalem, or the church of Chriſt.

Another paſſage, containing ſignificant prophetic names or titles, is Iſaiah ix. 6. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God,*

God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of peace. Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and juſtice, from henceforth even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this. This prophecy ſeems to be pretty plainly alluded to, and applied to the future Jeſus, by the angel in his ſalutation to Mary. Luke i. 32, 33. *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the ſon of the Higheſt; and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.* Now upon theſe words I would obſerve, in general, that, whatever theſe high titles may import, they appear, in the order of the prophecy, ſubſequent to *the government being laid on the ſhoulders of the ſon*, and to expreſs qualifications for executing that high office, and *for ſitting on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and with juſtice from henceforth, even for ever*; and conſequently, that this is a prediction of that authority and dominion over all things, for his church, to which Jeſus was exalted after his aſcenſion, and which he now poſſeſſeth at the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come, and where he muſt reign till all enemies be put under his feet. But leſt, by the magnificence of theſe titles, men ſhould be led to imagine, that the Son held theſe prerogatives eſſentially,

tially, independent and underived, the prophecy is ſufficiently guarded, not only by repreſenting this ſon as *given* (*i. e.* by God) but alſo by concluding with theſe words, *The zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this*, plainly ſhewing from whom the Son derives all theſe prerogatives.

I would further obſerve, in particular, concerning the two moſt lofty of theſe titles or names, *The mighty God*, *The everlaſting Father*; that the former of them may be very properly given to Jeſus Chriſt, in his ſtate of exaltation, always remembering by whom he was exalted, and from whom he derived his divine prerogatives and power. As to the latter, I ſhould think it muſt perplex the aſſerters of the proper divinity of the Son, to account for the application of the appropriate, and diſtinguiſhing title of the *firſt* perſon in the Trinity, to the *ſecond*. If (with the vulgar Latin and Arabic verſions) they render the original in this place, *The father of the future age*, all appearance of proof of the proper divinity, ariſing from this title, vaniſhes.

If we lay aſide a regard to the Maſoretic punctuation, and read the original according to the ancient manner of writing Hebrew, without the vowel points, the words אל גבר אבי עד, may be very literally and properly rendered, *The mighty God, my father for ever*; a title perfectly ſuitable to the Lord Jeſus, and conformable to the whole doctrine of the goſpel concerning him; at the ſame time, it well ſuits the purpoſe for which it is introduced in this prophecy, as it ſuggeſts an effectual ſecurity for the ſon's fulfilling

filling the purpoſes for which the government is placed on his ſhoulders, and himſelf ſet on the throne of David, &c. Let me add, that if (as ſeems probable) the angel, in his ſalutation of Mary, alluded to this paſſage of the prophet, he ſeems alſo to have alluded particularly to the words, אל גבור אבי עד, underſtood in the ſenſe I have juſt mentioned (the mighty God, my father for ever) when he ſays, *He ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt.*

VIGILIUS.

An Attempt to explain Hebrews, Chap. i. *the ſecond and following Verſes.*

IT is well known, that the grand cauſe of that diſguſt which the Jews had generally conceived againſt the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and of their averſion againſt his goſpel, aroſe from the meanneſs of his perſonal appearance when on earth, and the ignominious death on the croſs which he ſuffered. To remove this ſtumbling-block out of their way, the apoſtle very wiſely begins this addreſs to them, with repreſenting him to their attentive notice in that ſtate of glory, power and dominion to which he is exalted at the right hand of God. Having ſaid, ver. 2. that *God hath in theſe laſt days, ſpoken to us by his Son*; he immediately proceeds to preſent him, as it were, before them under the following deſcription; *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he hath made* (or formed)

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the ages, i. e. the preſent diſpenſation of God's government over mankind, eſtabliſhed by the goſpel, the adminiſtration whereof is committed to the Son. The word Αιων, here rendered *the world*, uniformly ſignifies, through the whole New Teſtament, a period or duration of time, definite, or indefinite: but the word is no where uſed, as I conceive, to denote this material or viſible ſtructure of the world, or this globe on which we live. The word Κοσμος, is generally, if not always, uſed for that purpoſe.

Ver. 3. *Who being (i. e.* now being) *the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his* (God's) *perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his* (God's) *power (when he had by himſelf purged our ſins) ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* Nothing ſeems plainer, than that all theſe magnificent characters are applied to the ſon as he is in his ſtate of glorification. The apoſtle proceeds, ver. 4. *Being made ſo much better than the angels, by how much he hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they.*

Ver. 5. *For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee.* Obſerve, that in the fifth chapter, ver. 5. the apoſtle refers the accompliſhment of theſe words of the Pſalmiſt to Chriſt's exaltation to be high prieſt in the heavenly places. *And again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son.*

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth the firſt-begotten into the world,** *he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him.* In the Pſalm it is, *worſhip him all ye gods.*

Ver. 7. *And of* (or concerning) *the angels he ſaith, Who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire.*

Ver. 8. *But concerning the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.*

Ver. 9. *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy follows.* Could we wiſh a better illuſtration of

* I would propoſe it for conſideration, whether, though the word in the original here rendered *world*, properly denotes the *habitable*, or *inhabited* world; the apoſtle does not uſe it in a ſenſe ſimilar to that wherein it was commonly uſed at that time through all the Roman dominions, viz. *empire* or *government*. Thus Luke ſays, chap. ii. 1. *There went out a decree from Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed:* by which can be meant only, all the provinces under the Roman dominion. In like manner, when the Jews at Theſſalonica accuſed the apoſtles before the magiſtrates, with turning the *world* upſide down, their meaning ſeems to be, that they attempted to diſturb the tranquillity and ſubvert the authority of the Roman government; for thus they proceed in their accuſation, *Theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Cæſar, ſaying, that there is another king, one Jeſus.* May not then the apoſtle's meaning in this place be, When he bringeth in the firſt-begotten into the empire or dominion? *i. e.* to which he is now exalted. Let it be obſerved further, that the 97th pſalm, from whence the apoſtle makes this quotation, begins thus, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the iſles be glad thereof, &c.* and is full of very magnificent deſcriptions of dominion and power, very applicable to that authority and dominion to which Chriſt is exalted at the right hand of God.

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theſe words of the Pſalmiſt, than what we have in the words of St. Paul, Philip. ii. 8, 9. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, &c.*

Ver. 10, 11, 12. In theſe verſes the apoſtle quotes an addreſs to the great Creator and everlaſting Ruler of the univerſe. In Pſalm cii. 25, 26, 27 ver. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt: and they all ſhall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* He then adds,

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels ſaid he,* (*i. e.* this great Creator and eternal Governor of all things) *at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footſtool.*

Ver. 14. *Are they not all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?*

Thus it appears to me very plain, that whatever ſublime titles, or magnificent expreſſions of authority, power and dominion, the apoſtle in this chapter borrows from the Pſalms, and aſcribes to the ſon, he refers only to that ſtate to which he is now exalted at the right hand of God; but not at all to any thing which he poſſeſſes eſſentially, independent and underived. It would even be an affront to the attention of the reader, to ſuppoſe that he hath not obſerved how repeatedly and variouſly he hath, through

the whole chapter, guarded againſt any ſuch miſconception.

Having thus led his readers to form very exalted ideas of the glorified Jeſus, he very properly proceeds in the ſecond chapter, to infer the very reverent attention which ought to be paid to his goſpel, far beyond what was due to the law of Moſes, which was delivered by a much inferior miniſtry, that of angels, and attended with leſs authentic atteſtations of its divine original. V. 1—5. And having applied to Chriſt, in a more eminent ſenſe, a paſſage (Pſalm viii. 4—8.) where the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the dominion over all his works here below, wherewith God hath inveſted man, he proceeds, in the following part of the chapter, in the moſt judicious manner, to remove the great prejudice of the Jews, on account of Chriſt's humiliation and ſufferings, by ſhewing, that it was by means of, and in reward for theſe things, that he obtained this glory and dignity. *We ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*, ver 9. alſo that there was the utmoſt fitneſs and propriety in this meaſure, for effecting the glorious purpoſes for which he was ſent into the world. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings*, ver. 10, &c.

VIGILIUS.

Remarks

Remarks on Chubb's Farewell, *continued from p.* 182.

MR. Chubb accuſes St. Paul of inſincerity, fraud and untruth, "in pretending that "he was perſecuted of the Jews, for *preaching* "*the reſurrection from the dead, and a future* "*ſtate*; a doctrine which they themſelves be- "lieved, and therefore could not be ſuppoſed "to perſecute him for; nor was he accuſed of "this, but of polluting the temple, by bringing "foreigners into it." This was, indeed, a more popular clamour to raiſe againſt him, and a more proper accuſation to bring before a Roman magiſtrate; but their inveteracy againſt him, and againſt the reſt of the apoſtles, really aroſe from their witneſſing and proclaiming, every where, the reſurrection of Jeſus, whom the Jews had procured to be crucified. See Acts iv. 1, 2. *And as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts and captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jeſus the reſurrection of the dead.* We cannot wonder that this ſhould be the chief and conſtant topic of their preaching, or that it ſhould provoke the murderers of Jeſus as it did. See chap. v. 27. *When they had brought Peter and the apoſtles, they ſet them before the council, and the high prieſt aſked them, ſaying, Did not we ſtrictly charge you, that you ſhould not teach in this name; and behold ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other*

apoſtles anſwered and ſaid, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree; Him hath God exalted with his right hand, &c. *and we are his witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took council to ſlay them. Then ſtood up one of the council, a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace, and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael take heed to yourſelves what ye intend to do as touching theſe men, and let them alone: For if this council, or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God.* This candour of this eminent Phariſee, St. Paul's old tutor, might perhaps induce St. Paul afterwards to engage the Phariſees in his favour, when he was in danger of being torn to pieces before the council, by throwing a bone of contention among his accuſers, who were part Phariſees and part Sadducees, ſaying, *I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee; of the hope of the reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion.* Acts xxiii. 6. This being the true ground of this cruel perſecution of him, ſome may be ready to think this a very innocent ſtratagem in the circumſtances he was in; and yet he ſeems himſelf afterwards to acknowledge it as a weakneſs, chap. xxiv. 21. which ſhews a delicacy in point of integrity that ought rather to eſtabliſh his character in that reſpect than otherwiſe. His preaching the reſurrection of Jeſus

Jeſus was not only the great cauſe of their hatred and perſecution of him, but ſeems to have been part of their *accuſation*, by Feſtus's account to king Agrippa, chap. xxv. 19. *But had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.* Nay, did not their orator, Tertullus, hint of this even before he mentioned his going about to profane the temple. *We found*, ſays he, *this man a mover of ſedition, a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes, viz.* by preaching to the Jews the reſurrection of their Meſſiah, and thereby exaſperating people's minds againſt their rulers, who had procured him to be condemned and crucified.

The author has taken great pains in a note, p. 329. to miſrepreſent a very innocent action, at leaſt of this apoſtle, and the as innocent and prudent advice of St. James and the elders to him; which was not (as this author would have it) to deceive thoſe many thouſands of Jewiſh chriſtians who were zealous of the law of Moſes; but to ſet them right, as to his own conduct, which had been greatly miſrepreſented to them. They were not *Judaizing* chriſtians, as he calls them, though zealous of the law. The *Judaizing chriſtians* were ſuch as were not content to obſerve the law of Moſes themſelves, but for impoſing it upon all the Gentile converts. This St. Paul would never have countenanced; but neither he nor any of the apoſtles, being Jews, and in Judea, ſcrupled obſerving the ancient eſtabliſhed rites and cuſtoms of their nation and national conſtitution, while it laſted,

and their appearing to do ſo, eſpecially St. Paul's, might have proved a ſtumbling-block to ſo many thouſands of their Jewiſh brethren. Suppoſe it was reported of me, that I had taught people up and down the country that it was ſinful to make uſe of a liturgy, or any precompoſed forms, in the worſhip of God; ſhould I be guilty of any fraud, if, to undeceive people, I ſhould take an opportunity to attend, with proper gravity, decency, and real devotion, with regard to the principal part of it, the public ſervice in my pariſh church? I cannot help remarking here, that there is no action, no character, no hiſtorical fact, no writing whatſoever, which prejudice, helped out by a fruitful inventive genius, may not dreſs up, and ſet in an odious, or, at leaſt, ſuſpicious light.

Page 334. "The reſurrection of Chriſt, (ſays this writer) "does not ſeem *wiſely* directed to evince the poſſibility and certainty of a "reſurrection to life eternal. When a great "and valuable end is to be obtained, the nature "and propriety of the thing requires that the "beſt and moſt effectual means ſhould be uſed "for its attainment." From whence he would infer, "that this could not be the method "which an infinitely wiſe God would take for "this purpoſe." I leave ſuch gentlemen as this author to diſpute, if they pleaſe, the *wiſdom* of it; but the event has proved it an *effectual* method; for there is not, I believe, a perſon in the world, or ever was, except one or two whimſical people, once at Corinth, who really believed

believed the reſurrection of Jeſus, and did not believe a general reſurrection and future ſtate, whatever influence it may have had on their morals. "But our Saviour (ſays this author) "ſhould have appeared as publicly after his "reſurrection as he did before, and to the chief "prieſts and elders; how *wicked* ſoever they "were, he came to ſave that which was *loſt*; "to call, not the righteous, but ſinners to re-"pentance. The more wicked and unbelieving "they were, the more proof he ſhould have "given them to convince and convert them."

And if this, his ſo public appearance was neceſſary to this purpoſe, and the wiſeſt and moſt effectual way to anſwer it, with equal reaſon may it be urged, he ſhould have appeared to all the world throughout all future ages, as well as to the Jews; and if he had really done ſo, I much queſtion whether there would have been then, or ever ſince, one more believer on him than as it is. The chief prieſts were informed of his reſurrection by the very perſons they employed and intereſted to guard againſt any fraud. If their word was not to be taken, why were they choſen; they ſhould have watched themſelves, but it is plain they were afraid it was true, and were as ſolicitous as poſſible to conceal it, at leaſt, as long as they could; riſen or not riſen they were determined not to own him for their Meſſiah; and to prevent, as much as in them lay, others from believing on him, leſt *the Romans ſhould come and take away both their place and nation.* John xi. 48. they feared men more than God. Nor is the tale they put

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into the mouths of the ſoldiers ſo very unlikely a political fetch as this author would make us believe. Is it ſo very uncommon a thing for bad men and politicians to forge and propagate a lie on a ſudden emergency, though it is not likely to live many days or hours? or were *theſe chief prieſts* uncapable of ſuch low *craft*, or poor artifice, to ſtop the mouths of the populace? This author allows them to be *obdurate* unbelievers, and thinks *that* a reaſon why Jeſus ſhould more eſpecially have appeared to them, to convince and ſave them. But *obduracy* is not to be turned in the nature of the thing. His appearance to them would not have done it. In a full aſſembly of them met together on purpoſe to ſuppreſs the preachers of Chriſt's reſurrection, who had juſt before wrought a miracle by the name of the riſen Jeſus, *they confer among themſelves, ſaying, What ſhall we do to theſe men, for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifeſt to all men that dwell at Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it; but that it ſpread no farther among the people, let us ſtraightly threaten them that they henceforth ſpeak to no man in this name*, Acts iv. 14—17. If Jeſus had appeared to ſuch men, and ſhewn them the print of the nails in his hands, and the wound in his ſide, would they have believed; I mean, received him for their Meſſiah? I think they would not. Sinners, through ignorance, inadvertence, prejudice, or the prevalency of exorbitant luſt and appetites, may be the objects of divine compaſſion, not *obdurate* ſinners. Our Saviour, indeed, ſaid upon the croſs, *Father, forgive them, they*

know

know not what they do. This might be true of many of thoſe who clamoured to have him crucified, or were otherwiſe active in the affair; and perhaps many of theſe very perſons might be of the number of thoſe who *were pricked to the heart at St. Peter's preaching*, Acts ii. 37. There was no occaſion for Chriſt's perſonal appearing to any honeſt minds, who heard his reſurrection proclaimed and witneſſed by credible eye-witneſſes of it, and by miracles wrought in his name. But this author thought he ſhould have appeared as publicly as poſſible, or at leaſt reſided at the houſe of ſome friend, where all perſons might have acceſs to him; in ſhort, to live his life over again here on earth, and expoſe himſelf again (to as little purpoſe as before) to all the like ill uſage, and to an aſſaſſination, if not a ſecond crucifixion, if we may judge of the treatment he would, in this caſe, have met with, from the ſpirit of the chief prieſts, who were for putting Lazarus again to death becauſe his reſurrection had cauſed many of the Jews to believe on Jeſus, and who appear to have been ſo much the more exaſperated againſt him and his followers, by how much the more evidence they had of his reſurrection and divine miſſion. See the third and fourth chapters of Acts. In ſhort, this ſet of people had both ſeen and hated both Chriſt and his Father, as he told them in his life-time.

This author thinks it unaccountable, "that, "for the ſpace of forty days, he ſhould not be "ſeen by any perſons living, except three or "four times, and by a few perſons (according to

to his conception) " about twenty or twenty-" five at the utmoſt." But this gueſs, both at the number of times and number of perſons to whom he appeared is perfectly arbitrary. Tho' the evangeliſts are extremely brief in their accounts, yet it is highly probable, that amongſt ſo many followers as Chriſt had in his life-time, viz. four and five thouſand at a time, many of them would attend the eleven diſciples into Galilee, where he appointed them to meet him after his reſurrection, at a proper diſtance from Jeruſalem, the heard quarters of their greateſt and moſt inveterate enemies. St. Paul makes no ſcruple to aſſert under his hand, in an epiſtle to a whole church, and which muſt ſoon be, and was communicated to other churches, that he was ſeen after his reſurrection of more than five hundred brethren *at once*, moſt of whom were living at the very time he ſo publicly aſſerted this, which was not above thirty years after the fact. And, no doubt, the five hundred witneſſes bore their public teſtimony to it as long as they lived. And the continued miracles wrought in the name of an ariſen Jeſus, confirmed this their teſtimony to all who ſaw them, and more eſpecially to thoſe who were made actual partakers of theſe gifts, which were not a few.

It is true, this author diſputes the authority of the writers who have given us theſe accounts. One, it ſeems, is a nameleſs hiſtorian, and the other might as well have been nameleſs, for any credit he is willing to give them. And yet there are no ancient writings extant, whereof

whereof we have half the evidence of their being wrote by the authors they are aſcribed to, or having been ſo ſcrupulouſly handed down to us, free from any wilful corruptions or material alterations. They were all written within thirty years, or a very few years, more or leſs, from the facts they relate, while many witneſſes of theſe facts, and many more inhabitants of the places, and cotemporaries of the time, where, and when they were tranſacted, enemies as well as friends, curious and learned writers too, both Jews and Gentiles, were living to contradict them, if they thought proper.

Although we knew not who were the writers of the four evangelical hiſtories, and the Acts of the Apoſtles, nor conſidered them as under any divine influence; there is in the writings themſelves, ſuch an appearance of a thorough acquaintance with the times they lived in, and the tranſactions they wrote of, or referred to, of capacity, integrity, diſintereſtedneſs, conſcientiouſneſs, and fear of God, as might gain them at leaſt equal credit, with any hiſtory that ever was wrote. I cannot read over the hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, let it have been written by Luke, or by whomſoever, without ſome aſtoniſhment of the ſlight put upon it, and the ſuſpicions raiſed againſt it by this author; and yet the introduction to it, the ſtyle and manner of it, together with the unanimous voice of antiquity, leave me not the leaſt room to doubt of its having the ſame author, whoſe goſpel bears the name of St. Luke.

There

There is certainly as ſhrewd a judgment to be made, of the capacity and credibility of an author, by his writings, as of that of a neighbour or acquaintance, by his known character, and it is not eaſy for another to alter or adulterate an author, without leaving ſome veſtiges of the fraud, but eſpecially when innumerable copies have been early taken, and early diſperſed into different and very diſtant countries. Moſt of the apoſtles, the appointed eye-witneſſes of our Saviour's reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven, bore witneſs to the truth of theſe facts with uncommon preſence of mind, to the very faces of the greateſt and fierceſt of the enemies of Chriſt, and under threatnings, ſcourgings, and actual martyrdom itſelf; as did alſo innumerable others, who had received theſe accounts at firſt hand from their mouths.

Page 355—366. It is objected by this author, "That the perſons Chriſt appeared to, after his "reſurrection, did not know him. He appear-"ed in different forms. Their eyes were hol-"den that they ſhould not know him, and "opened that they might know him." &c.

Though the author makes three diſtinct objections of theſe, and with his uſual inſinuations, parades about them for eleven pages together, yet they all relate to one and the ſame ſimple fact. It is ſaid by St. Mark xvi. 12. *He appeared to two of his diſciples in another form.* By St. Luke, on the ſame occaſion, *that their eyes were holden that they ſhould not know him, i. e.* by the different form or appearance, either of his dreſs or countenance, or both, which he had thought

thought fit, for a little while, to aſſume, that he might have an opportunity of opening and explaining to them the ancient prophecies concerning his death which had affected them, and his reſurrection which had ſurpriſed them greatly, before he gave them ocular demonſtration of the latter. Having done that, he threw off the diſguiſe, whatever it was, and appeared to their thereby opened eyes, in his own proper perſon, to their entire ſatisfaction, and appeared again and again to them afterwards, without any ſuch previous introduction, converſing moſt freely with them and the other apoſtles, not to mention again, the more than five hundred diſciples who ſaw him at once.

Whether St. Paul had ever ſeen him before his crucifixion, is uncertain, but that he ſaw him afterwards, we have his own word for it, who was moſt likely to know, and whoſe word, I think, may be taken. "It could not be in his "way to Damaſcus (argues this author) becauſe "when a great light from heaven ſhone round "about him, he was ſtruck blind by it." But he certainly ſaw this light before he was ſtruck blind by it, and if he ſaw the light, he might ſee Jeſus at the ſame time, ſurrounded by it, who told him who he was; *I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuteſt, &c.* Ananias refers to this, when he ſays to Paul, *The God of our Fathers hath choſen thee that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that Juſt One, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth; for thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men of what thou haſt ſeen and heard.* Acts xxii. 14, 15. What if this is a nameleſs hiſtorian, who

who relates this? He appears to be an honeſt and a ſenſible one, and to have been a companion of St. Paul in many of his travels, as well as St. Luke.

SECTION V.

The author's reaſoning about a future ſtate, and day of judgment, leaves the matter, after all, in as great obſcurity as before, or rather more ſo. Upon his principles I ſhould certainly argue with St. Paul, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* I do not mean, nor did St. Paul mean, let us do it to exceſs, ſo as to ſhorten life or impair health, any more than expoſe ourſelves to fatigue, perſecution, ſufferings of various kinds, and untimely death, by doing ill-received good offices to an ungrateful world. What pleaſure did it give this author to think he had hit another blot in St. Paul? See p. 404.

This writer heſitates in his opinion, whether the ſoul is not the body modified in a peculiar manner; or, if really diſtinct from the body, whether it may not be as periſhable as the body at death. I ſatisfy myſelf with the ſcripture account, which in itſelf is as probable as any other, viz. *That then the duſt ſhall return to the earth as it was; and the ſpirit ſhall return to God who gave it. That our life is hid* (or laid up ſafe) *with Chriſt in God, and when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory.* To me it ſeems impoſſible for us, mortals, to know any thing ſatisfactorily of a reſurrection from the dead and a future ſtate, but by ſupernatural *revelation.* Nor can I conceive

ceive any more proper way whereby God Almighty might have revealed this to us than as he has done it in the goſpel. But ſome men ſtill err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God, *i. e.* not rightly underſtanding them.

Remarks on Vol. II. Sect. VI. *concerning* Divine Revelation.

The author aſſerts, p. 5. "That we have no "way to diſtinguiſh, with certainty, *divine* re- "velation from deluſion."

How far he carries his idea of *certainty*, I know not. Our abſolutely *certain* knowledge lies in a very little compaſs. The wiſeſt men act, and muſt act and believe too, upon high degrees of probability, or they muſt act and believe ſcarce any thing. And he who, by our very conſtitution, has laid us under this neceſſity, will not ſuffer us to be deceived hereby to our great diſadvantage. Now we certainly may diſtinguiſh, with great degrees of probability, betwixt divine revelation and deluſion. If Moſes, for inſtance, ſaw a buſh on fire, and not conſumed, and on his near approach to it, heard a voice from the midſt of it, calling to him by name, and ſaying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob; I have ſeen the affliction of my people, and am come down to deliver them, &c.* could he avoid regarding this as a divine revelation, eſpecially when, according to the aſſurances then given him, he was afterwards empowered to work ſo many aſtoniſhing miracles

publicly before Pharaoh and all Egypt? Would not this confirm himſelf in this belief? And when, upon the Iſraelites' flight, and the Egyptians' purſuit of them, a pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night, conducted the Iſraelites; and when the Egyptians were upon the point of overtaking and falling upon them, removed, and placed itſelf betwixt the two camps, a cloud and darkneſs to the one, and a light by night to the other, ſo that the one came not near the other all the night; when, at Moſes's ſtretching forth his rod at God's command, the ſea retired, and gave the Iſraelites a ſafe paſſage, and returned at the like ſignal upon the Egyptians, and overwhelmed them; could any of the *Iſraelites*, any more than Moſes, doubt whether the hand of God was in all this? When the ſolemn feaſt of the paſſover had been inſtituted, and was with other feſtivals, annually obſerved by that whole people, great and ſmall, in all their families from generation to generation, in expreſs memory of theſe things; could any ſucceeding generation of that people ever doubt of God's appearing, as he is ſaid to do, to Moſes, and giving him commiſſion to do what he did? When the apoſtles, after our Saviour's aſcenſion, found themſelves on a ſudden empowered to ſpeak a variety of different languages, and reſtore the uſe of limbs to a man, lame from his mother's womb, in conſequence of their maſter's promiſe to them; could they poſſibly doubt of the divine influence? Or could thoſe innumerable perſons who, being aſſembled from diſtant countries of different languages, heard them

them ſpeak intelligibly in all their different tongues the wonderful works of God, who ſaw theſe cures performed, and, perhaps, upon joining themſelves to them, were many of them ſoon after made to partake of ſome or other of theſe miraculous gifts; could they poſſibly look upon all this as deluſion? And as for the *viſions* and *dreams*, this author treats with ſuch contempt, is it impoſſible for God, the Father of our ſpirits, to make ſuch extraordinary impreſſions on the human mind, either ſleeping or waking, as ſhall effectually convince the inſpired perſon from whence it comes? Can one man communicate any thing to another man to the ſatisfaction of that other perſon, from whom it was that he received the information; and ſhall we deny that power to the Almighty Mind? And when theſe divine revelations have been communicated to others, and repeatedly, and punctually anſwered by actual events foretold in this way; thoſe other perſons will have a moral certainty, *i. e.* a ſufficient probability of their having been divine revelations and not deluſions, and, conſequently, that the perſon who foretold them was not deceived or a deceiver, but a true prophet.

"But the Jewiſh revelation (ſays this writer) "in ſeveral of its branches will, by no means, "comport with God's moral character, which "character muſt not be given up." p. 16.

No, by no means; let God be true, and every man a liar. But what if raſh and fallible men miſtake this revelation, as well as the goſpel revelation? Many things may *ſeem* fooliſh, unjuſt,

or unkind, which are in reality neither, but the reverſe of all theſe. I might inſtance, in many events of providence, which have therefore been imputed by ſome men to an evil being. I have before conſidered the inſtances that are here again produced, againſt the wiſdom and equity of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and cannot but think them very reconcileable to infinite wiſdom, and paternal goodneſs; and if there were any other inſtances, I could not ſo eaſily reconcile, would impute it to my own ignorance of ſome circumſtances, rather than give up all divine revelation, or even the Jewiſh. Theſe very wiſe men are not apt to entertain a ſuſpicion of this kind, of themſelves; as much as they affect the character of Free Thinkers, they ſeem to be in as narrow and contracted a way of thinking and interpreting ſcripture, as the moſt rigid Calviniſts, and ſometimes take up with their very interpretations on purpoſe to diſparage the ſcriptures, as this author has done in ſeveral places of this his Farewell. *Who can by ſearching find out God, who can underſtand the Almighty unto perfection?* His ways, and his thoughts, are as much above ours, as the heaven is above the earth; his wiſdom and his judgments are unſearchable, and his ways, many of them, at leaſt, paſt finding out. The ſeeming irregular retrograde motions of the heavenly bodies, once puzzled the natural philoſophers, as much as theſe ſcripture-difficulties do ſome of our moral ones. Mr. Ferguſon has obſerved concerning one of the former. "He might, perhaps, be at "a loſs to find out the true cauſe of theſe in-

"equalities

" equalities (the retrograde motions of the " planets) eſpecially if he were one of thoſe " who would rather (with the greateſt juſtice) " charge frail man with ignorance, than the " Almighty with being the author of ſuch con- " fuſion." What confuſion of *cycles* upon *cycles* did theſe philoſophers once invent, to the diſgrace of the admirable works of nature, rather than appear ignorant of any thing! As later improvements in aſtronomy have given a ſatisfactory ſolution of theſe difficulties, ſo may future improvements in our divinity as ſatisfactorily ſolve the other. But theſe writers would give a check to all ſuch improvements by repreſenting their own *ſyſtem* as already perfect, and every thing which does not tally with it, as falſe, abſurd, ridiculous, and unworthy of ſerious examination.

How unfair this writer is, appears every where, in that, while he will admit of nothing on the oppoſite ſide, but the moſt abſolute *certainty*, he ſatisfies himſelf with, and palms upon his reader the ſlighteſt, *ſeeming*, preſumptions, fancied probability, and mere ſuſpicion on his own ſide of the queſtion. " As to the ſigns and " wonders, &c. (ſays he) ſaid to have attended " the people of Iſrael in Egypt, the Wilderneſs, " &c. as theſe facts may have taken place, ſo " the caſe may have been otherwiſe, ſeeing the " credit of theſe relations reſts principally, if " not wholly, upon the authority of that ſingle " hiſtory. The Jews, from their ſettlement in " Canaan, to David's time, *ſeem* to have been an " ignorant, unactive people, and as it does not

" appear, nor is there the leaſt ground for pre-
" ſuming they had copies of their hiſtory put
" into their hands, ſo the enlarging, curtailing,
" altering, or corrupting of that hiſtory *might*
" eaſily have been done."

That copies could not be ſo common as if printing had then been found out, I allow. But copies they certainly had, beſides that which was laid up as a ſacred treaſure in the houſe of God at Jeruſalem (which probably was the original autograph.) The Samaritans had the Pentateuch before the ſeparation of the Ten Tribes, and there might be, and no doubt were, ſeveral other copies of the law both amongſt the Samaritans and the Jews, though they might be too much neglected and forgot, through the corruption of the times. However, their various feſtivals were a conſtant univerſal hiſtory of theſe remarkable facts, which their very children read, as it was deſigned they ſhould; as appears from the very inſtitution of the paſſover in particular, Exod. xii. 26. *And it ſhall come to paſs, when your children ſhall ſay unto you, What mean ye by this ſervice? that ye ſhall ſay, &c.*

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS has advanced a great number of objections, or ſcruples at leaſt, concerning St. Paul's way of reaſoning and quoting, or alluding to paſſages in the Old Teſtament,

ment, moſt of which, I apprehend, have been already anſwered or obviated by ſome or other learned advocates for divine revelation, particularly Mr. Pierce of Exeter; to whoſe writings I beg leave to refer him, in anſwer to his Remarks on Heb. i. 5, 6. and 10—12. That learned writer thought theſe words, *I will be to him a father, and he ſhall be to me a ſon*, refer to a prophecy of Nathan to David, 1 Chron. xvii. 4—14. and though there be an expreſſion to the ſame purpoſe, with a ſmall alteration, in the 22d and 28th chapters, *He ſhall be my ſon, and I will be his father*; yet they were two diſtinct prophecies, delivered at a conſiderable diſtance of time the one from the other. In the former, the word of the Lord came unto Nathan. In the latter, the word of the Lord came unto David himſelf. In the former the Meſſiah is intended, for it is ſaid to David, *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou ſhalt ſleep with thy fathers, I will ſet up thy ſeed after thee, which ſhall proceed out of thy bowels, &c. I will be his father, and he ſhall be my ſon.* Whereas his immediate ſon Solomon, who is intended in the ſacred prophecy, was ſet up in his father's lifetime. How came the Meſſiah to be generally ſtiled by the Jews, *the ſon of David*, but from their thus underſtanding this prophecy?

The ſame learned writer ſuppoſes the changing the foundations which God had anciently laid of the earth and the heavens, to intend his transferring the government of the world and of the church from the miniſtry of angels to that of Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhould be head over them and angels too; and why may not the whole ſecond

pſalm be, as he ſuppoſes, prophetic of Chriſt and his reign, though poſſibly the inſpired penman might not himſelf thoroughly underſtand the meaning of it, any more than Daniel that of ſome of his prophecies? The ancient Jews ſo underſtood it, although the later Jews interpret it otherwiſe, leſt the Chriſtians ſhould avail themſelves of it. Dr. Sykes, indeed, thinks the *people* of Iſrael are here ſpoken of under the title of *God's ſon*, and yet juſtifies the apoſtle's alluſion. Mr. Pierce's account ſeems moſt ſatisfactory to me, as well as what he ſays upon thoſe words, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him*, or become ſubject to him; perhaps all theſe pſalms from the 90th to the 100th, incluſive, might be ſongs of Moſes, the man of God, ſeveral of them, however, ſeem prophetic of the goſpel times, and of the calling of the Gentiles.

As to PAULINUS's next objection againſt St. Paul's argument, from ſome expreſſions in the ſong of Moſes, Deut. xxxii. When I read that admirable prophetic ſong, together with the preceding chapter; with what ſolemnity it is introduced, and by the divine authority ordered to be penned, and taught to all the people and their children after them, ſo as *never* to be forgotten, out of the mouths of their *ſeed*, but to be a ſtanding witneſs againſt them, when variety of evils and troubles ſhould befall them, for all their foreſeen and foretold backſlidings: I can never imagine that this aweful prophecy had no farther view than to their ſucceeding wars with the Canaanites, and at laſt their captivities in Aſſyria and Chaldea, but muſt, I think, extend to the remoteſt remains of that people as a diſtinct

a diſtinct people, and particularly take in their laſt dreadful overthrow and national extirpation by the Romans, which ſo remarkably anſwered to the 25th and 26th verſes, *The ſword without, and terror within, ſhall deſtroy the young man and the virgin, the* ſuckling *alſo, and the man of gray hairs. I ſaid, I would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to ceaſe from amongſt men; were it not, &c.* The Hebrews themſelves, to whom this epiſtle was wrote, could not, I think, but ſee this prophecy as extending to all generations of them, and therefore could have no objection againſt this writer's applying ſome part of it to circumſtances then preſent; nor, in this light, is there any impropriety in that pathetic exclamation, which follows in the 29th and 30th verſes: *O! that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end,* (which, in ſcripture language, ſignifies *their very diſtant generations*) *how ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, &c.*

I can ſee nothing ſo ſurprizing, nothing ſo incompatible, as PAULINUS repreſents it, in the bleſſing of Abraham coming upon the Gentiles, or their being taken into the ſame gracious covenant with him, *under the notion of a promiſed bleſſing to him,* and an acceptable event to all his believing, benevolent offſpring; and yet the ſame event proving a *curſe* and ſtumbling block, and being propheti-cally threatened as a *puniſhment,* to ſuch of his degenerate poſterity, as out of envy ſhould reject, and cut themſelves off from this covenant, becauſe they diſdained to partake of it in common with their heathen neighbours. Notwithſtanding this,

this, that the generality of the Jews were diſguſted, ſome of them, very probably, at that very time might be induced hereby, as St. Paul expected, to embrace the goſpel. Nor is it at all unreaſonable to expect, if the chriſtian religion ſhould recover its primitive purity, and be therein exhibited and univerſally received in the world, and the Jews ſo long continue a diſtinct people, that, ſtruck with ſuch an event, and wearied out with their ſo long fruitleſs expectations, they ſhould at laſt embrace the chriſtian faith, as St. Paul ſeems to have foretold they will.

Paulinus ſeems to think "St. Paul a little off "his guard when he ſaid, Heb. ix. 22. that "without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion; "for, in the Old Teſtament, and even in the "books of Moſes themſelves, we frequently "read of ſins being forgiven, and even of atone-"ment being made where there was no blood "ſhed or required." See Repoſitory, vol. I. p. 201, 202. But does not St. Paul really appear to be upon his guard, even againſt this very objection, by ſaying, *almoſt* all things are by the law purified with blood? and *remiſſion* in the latter part of the ſentence means the ſame, as *purged* or purging in the former part, and reſpects the very ſame things; a ſacrifice, the ſhedding of blood, and taking away life, ſeems anciently to have been a common and very material appendage, or concomitant of a covenant betwixt God and man. The queſtion is, How came it into this, or any other uſe? Clemens has given an ingenious and plauſible account, I confeſs, in the

the number referred to; but, with all due deference, I would obſerve, that the ſacrifice which righteous Abel offered to God, ſeems to me of too early a date to owe its original to the cauſe there aſſigned, and too expreſsly acceptable to God, not to have been of his own appointing, perhaps to Adam immediately after the fall, though not mentioned in the very ſhort hiſtory we have of that time, *God made them coats of ſkins*, Gen. iii. 21. What ſkins muſt theſe be, unleſs of beaſts? and what muſt theſe beaſts be ſlain for, if not for ſome farther purpoſe, than merely to ſupply our firſt parents with more commodious garments than fig-leaves; might it not be, by the letting out of blood, and with it the life of theſe creatures, to ſhew them what *death* was, that immediate and violent death which they had deſerved for their diſobedience, to be a ſign or token of that mercy he ſhewed to them in ſparing them, perhaps of that covenant or promiſe he made to them and their poſterity, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould break the ſerpent's head*, and why not to ſhadow out the future death and ſacrifice of Chriſt, by which, inſtead of the tree of life, from which they were now excluded, they and theirs might yet obtain *eternal life* in a future world, without a divine appointment? I cannot imagine how Adam or Abel, either ſhould think of taking away the life of a lamb, or any other innocent creature; or for what uſe; they could ſcarce think ſo early of feeding upon it themſelves, much leſs, then, of it being food for God, or more acceptable to him roaſted than raw, dead than alive; the heathen

then ſacrifices ſeem to me much more likely to have taken their riſe from theſe, than theſe from them.

Suppoſing pſalm viii. 3—8. to mean no more than the dominion God gave to Adam, at the creation, over all the inferior creatures here on earth; I ſee no abſurdity or impropriety in the apoſtle's taking occaſion from hence, to ſhew that the man Chriſt Jeſus, *who by the grace of God taſted death for every man*, is actually exalted to a larger and more honourable *dominion*, even over angels. But I leave this and PAULINUS's following remarks (at leaſt for the preſent) to what has been offered on the ſeveral ſubjects by former writers, or what may be farther ſuggeſted by ſome abler hand, than that of

Gentlemen,

Your hitherto indulged humble ſervant,

December 3, 1771. W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

It gives me particular pleaſure to find, that the ſubject of the Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt *is in the way of being fairly and candidly diſcuſſed by your correſpondents. If you think the following obſervations will be worth the notice either of the* Arians *or* Socinians, *I ſhall hope to ſee them inſerted in your* Repoſitory.

I am, &c.

LIBERIUS.

General Obſervations *tending to prove that Chriſt had no Exiſtence before his Incarnation, and an Explanation of ſome of the moſt conſiderable of thoſe* Texts of Scripture, *which have been thought to favour the contrary Opinion.*

THE Socinian Hypotheſis is thought to have the advantage over the Arian with reſpect to *arguments of a general nature*, or ſuch as are derived from general views of the chriſtian ſcheme, by perſons who cannot think that it is favoured by the moſt obvious ſenſe of ſome paſſages of ſcripture. I ſhall, therefore, beg leave to lay before your readers, ſuch obſervations as have occurred to me, for illuſtrating ſeveral of thoſe texts. But as we ought never to loſe ſight of general arguments, when we are conſidering the meaning of *particular texts*, I ſhall introduce them with reciting a few of ſuch arguments as have had the greateſt weight with me in my reflections upon the ſubject.

The author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, one of whoſe principal objects was to reconcile the Jews to the thoughts of a ſuffering Meſſiah, ſeems to make uſe of arguments which neceſſarily ſuppoſe Chriſt to have been a man like ourſelves; as when he ſays, Heb. ii. 9. *We ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* In this paſſage, the apoſtle ſeems to conſider Chriſt as a *man*, in direct oppoſition to created beings of a *ſuperior nature*, or *angels*, under which denomination Chriſt himſelf muſt have been ranked, according to the phraſeology of

of ſcripture, if he had exiſted prior to his becoming man; ſince no other term is made uſe of, to denote his nature and conſtitution, as diſtinct from that of men and angels. With this view he applies to Chriſt, that authority and dominion which is aſcribed to man, as diſtinguiſhed from angels by the Pſalmiſt, as ver. 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak. But one, in a certain place, teſtified, ſaying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him. Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedſt him with glory and honour, and didſt ſet him over the works of thine hands. Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet.* As in this paſſage, he plainly conſiders the nature of man as properly characterized by his being *a little lower than the angels*, and he applies the very ſame expreſſion to Chriſt without giving the leaſt hint of any diſtinction between them. I cannot help thinking, that in the apoſtle's idea, the nature of both was preciſely the ſame.

It is alſo remarkable, that this ſame writer ſpeaks of Chriſt as diſtinguiſhed from angels, when he ſays, i. 9. *That God had anointed him with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows*, by which, therefore, in this connection, I do not ſee how we can help underſtanding, his *fellow men*, or *fellow prophets*.

This writer ſeems alſo to lay particular ſtreſs on Chriſt's having *felt* as we feel, and having been *tempted* as we are tempted; and that, for this purpoſe, it was neceſſary that he ſhould be,

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in all reſpects, what we ourſelves are, ii. 11, &c. *For both he that ſanctifieth and they who are ſanctified are all of one; for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren—and children*, v. 13, 14. *Foraſmuch, then, as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame.* And again, ver. 17. *Wherefore, in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt*, ver. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* Now I cannot help thinking, from theſe paſſages, that the apoſtle had an idea of Chriſt being much more what we are, and conſequently of his feeling more as we do, than he could have meant, upon the ſuppoſition of his having been of an angelic, or ſuperangelic nature. For then, the views that he had of his *ſufferings*, and conſequently his *feelings* under them, muſt have been exceedingly diſſimilar to ours. And every argument that the apoſtle uſes, to ſhew the impropriety of Chriſt's being an angel, ſeems to weigh much more againſt his being of a nature ſuperior to angels.

If it be ſuppoſed that, upon becoming an inhabitant of this world, Chriſt loſt all conſciouſneſs of his former pre-exiſtent ſtate, I do not ſee of what uſe his ſuperior powers could poſſibly have been to him; or, which comes to the ſame thing, what occaſion there was for ſuch a being in the buſineſs. Beſides, the hypotheſis of an intelligent being, thinking and acting in one ſtate, and loſing all remembrance of what he had been

been and done in another, has ſomething in it that looks ſo arbitrary and unnatural, that one would not have recourſe to it, but upon the moſt urgent neceſſity.

It ſhould ſeem, however, that if Chriſt did pre-exiſt, it was not unknown to him in this world, ſince one of the ſtrongeſt arguments for that hypotheſis is his praying, that *his father would glorify him with the glory which he had with him before the world was.* John xvii. 5. But if Chriſt did retain a perfect conſciouſneſs of his former ſtate, and conſequently retained all the *powers*, and all the *knowledge* of which he was poſſeſſed, in that ſtate, I have no idea of ſuch an *increaſe in wiſdom* as the evangeliſt Luke aſcribes to him, when he ſays, ii. 52. *And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and men.* In the idea of this evangeliſt, Jeſus certainly made ſuch improvements in knowledge, as other well-diſpoſed youths make; ſo that I think he had manifeſtly no other idea of him.

Similar to the abovementioned reaſoning of the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, is that of the apoſtle John, or rather that of Chriſt himſelf, John v. 27. *And he has given him authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the Son of man*; for I do not ſee the force of this inference, unleſs the meaning of it be, that Chriſt, being a man like ourſelves, having felt as we feel, and having been tempted and tried as we have, is the moſt unexceptionable of all judges. No man can complain of it, ſince it is being judged, as it were, by our *peers*, and by a perſon who knows

knows how to make every proper allowance for us.

Some may poſſibly lay ſtreſs on its being ſaid by the writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, in the paſſage abovementioned, that Chriſt himſelf *took* fleſh and blood, as if it had depended upon his own choice, whether he would become a man or not, which implies a pre-exiſtent ſtate. But the word μετεχω is uſed for *partaking* or *ſharing in*, abſolutely, without any reſpect to choice, and is uſed in that ſenſe in two other paſſages of this epiſtle, viz. v. 13. vii. 13. The apoſtle ſpeaks of *the propriety of the divine deſignation*, not of the motive of Chriſt's election. Alſo in other places, he is repreſented as *paſſive* with reſpect to the ſame event. Thus, in the ninth verſe of the ſame chapter, it is ſaid that *Jeſus was made a* little lower than the angels, and not that *he made himſelf lower*, or condeſcended.

It is ſaid v. 16. That *Chriſt took not on him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham.* But επιλαμβανομαι, which is the word here uſed, properly ſignifies, and is in every other place, in the New Teſtament, rendered to *lay hold upon.* In this place, therefore, the meaning of it probably is, that Chriſt did not (after he appeared in the character of the Meſſiah) lay hold upon, ſo as to *interpoſe in the favour of*, or *reſcue* angels, but the ſeed of Abraham; and then we ſee that the apoſtle infers that there was a neceſſity, or at leaſt an exceeding great propriety, that a Mediator for men ſhould be, in all reſpects, a man; for he immediately adds, *Therefore, in all things, it behoved*

him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt, &c.

Indeed there appears to me to be a moſt evident propriety that a perſon who acted ſo important a part with reſpect to mankind, as Chriſt did, who was ſent to be our inſtructor and example, and eſpecially who came to aſcertain the great doctrine of a reſurrection from the dead, ſhould be, with reſpect to his nature, the very ſame that we ourſelves are; that he might exhibit before us a pattern of proper *human virtue*, and eſpecially that he might die as we ourſelves die, and his reſurrection be the reſurrection of a man like ourſelves; and ſo the proper *firſt fruits from the dead*, and conſequently of the very *ſame kind* with thoſe of which the *general harveſt* will conſiſt, and thereby give us the greater reaſon to hope, that becauſe *Chriſt lives we ſhall live alſo.*

It is evident, that the moſt intelligent of the Jews expected nothing more than a mere man for their Meſſiah; nor can it be ſaid that any of the ancient prophecies give us the leaſt hint of any thing farther. Had the prophecies not been explicit, there ſeems to have been the greateſt reaſon why our Lord, or his apoſtles, ſhould have expreſsly obſerved that they were ſo; or if they had been univerſally miſunderſtood, or perverted, we might expect that this ſhould have been noticed by our Lord, as well as other abuſes and miſtakes which prevailed in his time. Or, if a diſcovery of ſo great importance would have ſtaggered the faith, or checked the freedom of the diſciples of our Lord, when

when they were fully apprized of the tranſcendent greatneſs of the perſon whom they had conſidered as a man only like themſelves, we might have expected that this great diſcovery would have been made to them when their minds were fully enlightened, by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, or at ſome other time, when they were inſtructed in all things relating to the religion they had to teach. And whenever the revelation of a thing ſo highly *intereſting*, and *unexpected*, as this muſt have been, had been made to them, their wonder and ſurprize muſt have been ſuch, as we ſhould have found ſome traces or intimations of in their writings.

Nor can it be ſuppoſed that a thing of ſo wonderful a nature as this, could have been announced to the body of chriſtians, who certainly had not, at firſt, the moſt remote idea of ſuch a thing, without exciting an aſtoniſhment that could not have been concealed, and ſuch ſpeculations and debates as we muſt have heard of. And yet the apoſtles, and the whole chriſtian world, are ſuppoſed to have paſſed from a ſtate of abſolute ignorance concerning the nature of their Lord and maſter (regarding him in the familiar light of a friend and brother) to the full conviction of his being the moſt glorious of all created natures; him by whom God originally made, and conſtantly ſupported all things, without leaving any intimations by which it is poſſible for us to learn, in what manner ſo wonderful a communication was made

to them, or of the effects that it had on their own minds, or thoſe of others.

At whatever time it be ſuppoſed that the apoſtles were firſt apprized of the ſuperangelic nature of their maſter, it might be expected, that ſo very material a change in their conceptions concerning him, would have been attended with a correſpondent change in their language, when they ſpoke of him; and yet, through the whole book of Acts he has hardly any other appellation than ſimply that of *a man*. Thus the apoſtle Peter calls him, Acts ii. 22. *A man approved of God*; and the apoſtle Paul, Acts xvii. 31. *The man whom God ordained*. Nor when we may moſt certainly conclude that the apoſtles meant to ſpeak of him in his *higheſt capacity*, do they give him any other title; as when the apoſtle Paul ſays, 1. Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men*, THE MAN *Chriſt Jeſus*. Now had this Mediator between God and man been of a *middle nature* between God and man, I think one might have expected ſome poſitive declaration of it in this or ſome ſuch place; and that the apoſtle would not have expreſſed himſelf in a manner ſo very unguarded, and which, without ſome explanation, muſt neceſſarily lead his readers into a very great miſtake. It is in vain, however, that we look through the whole New Teſtament for any thing like ſuch an expreſs declaration, or explanation on the ſubject; and a doctrine of this extraordinary nature is only deduced by way of inference from caſual expreſſions.

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It is alſo with me a very ſtrong preſumption againſt the Arian hypotheſis, that no *uſe* is made, by the writers of the New Teſtament, of ſo extraordinary a fact, as that of the union of a ſuperangelic ſpirit with the body of a man. No argument or exhortation is ever grounded upon it; whereas it might have been expected, that ſo very wonderful a thing as this muſt have been alluded to, and argued from, in a great variety of reſpects; and eſpecially that the firſt converts to chriſtianity ſhould have been frequently, and very diſtinctly informed of the high rank of their Maſter; eſpecially as the great popular objection to the chriſtian ſcheme was the mean birth and obſcurity of its author, and the diſgraceful treatment he met with in the world. The very few texts in which it is thought by ſome that arguments are drawn from the pre-exiſtent ſtate of Chriſt, appear to me to refer to nothing more than the dignity with which he was inveſted as *Meſſiah*, after he was *ſent of God*, and endued with power from on high, for the important purpoſes of his miſſion.

It weighs much with me, that if ſo very extraordinary a thing as the deſcent of a ſuperangelic ſpirit, to animate a human body, had been true, it muſt have appeared, in the courſe of the hiſtory of Chriſt, that ſuch an extraordinary meaſure was neceſſary; as by his acting a part which a mere man was either naturally incapable of, or in which there was an obvious impropriety for a mere man to act. But ſo far are we from perceiving any thing of this in the Evangelical Hiſtory, that nothing is exhibited to

us in it, but the appearance of *a man approved of God*, and *aſſiſted* by him. For, though no man could have done what he is ſaid to have done, unleſs God had been with him, yet, with that aſſiſtance, every thing muſt have been eaſy to him.

If our Lord had in himſelf, though derived originally from God, any extraordinary degree of wiſdom, or peculiar ability of any other kind, for carrying on the work of man's redemption, above the meaſure or capacity of that nature which God has given to man, he would hardly have declared ſo frequently, and ſo expreſsly as he does, that *of his own ſelf he could do nothing*, that *the words which he ſpake were not his own*, but *his Father's who ſent him*, and *that his Father within him did the works*. This is certainly the proper language of a perſon who is poſſeſſed of no more natural advantage than any other man. If he had any ſuperior powers abſtracted from what he derived from the immediate agency of God, in what do they appear?

So ſolicitous does the Divine Being always appear that his *rational* offſpring, mankind, ſhould underſtand, and approve of his proceedings reſpecting them, that there is hardly any meaſure which he has adopted, that is of much moment to us, for which ſome plain reaſon is not aſſigned, by one or other of the ſacred writers. Indeed, this is a circumſtance that cannot but contribute greatly to the efficacy of ſuch meaſures. But though, I believe, every other circumſtance relating to the ſcheme of redemption is clearly revealed to us, yet we neither find

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any reaſon aſſigned for ſo important a preliminary to it, as the *incarnation* of the firſt of all created beings, nor are we any where given to underſtand, that this *was* a neceſſary preliminary to it, though the reaſons for it were ſuch, as we could not comprehend. A conduct ſo exceedingly dark and myſterious as this, has no example in the whole hiſtory of the diſpenſations of God to mankind.

It has often been obſerved, and I cannot but think very juſtly, that the uniform ſcripture doctrine of the preſent and future dignity of Chriſt, being conferred as the reward of his ſervices and ſufferings on earth, is peculiarly favourable to the idea of his being a man only; and I think the Arians are obliged to ſtrain very hard in order to make out any material difference between the pre-exiſtent and preſent ſtate of Chriſt; or to explain the nature of his *reward*, of which ſo ſtriking an account is always given, if there be no material difference between theſe two ſtates.

Laſtly; How it may affect others I cannot tell, but with me it is a very great objection to the notion of the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, that it favours ſtrongly of the oriental doctrine of the pre-exiſtence of all human ſouls, which was the foundation of the Gnoſtic hereſy, and the ſource of great corruption in genuine chriſtianity. For if the ſoul of one man might have pre-exiſted, ſeparate from the body, why might not the ſoul of another, or of all? Nay, analogy ſeems to require that the whole ſpecies be upon the ſame footing, in a caſe which ſo very nearly concerns the firſt and conſtituent principles of their nature. Beſides, the opinion of the ſepa-

rability of the thinking part of a man from his bodily frame, even after he comes into the world, is ſo far from being agreeable to the phenomena of human nature, that it is almoſt expreſsly contradicted by all of them. For every thing that we ſee of man demonſtrates that his capacity for thinking depends upon the ſtate of his brain. It is injured when this is injured; it is obſtructed when this is obſtructed; it is ſuſpended in a ſtate of ſound ſleep, and therefore may be fairly preſumed to be more effectually ſuſpended, and entirely to ceaſe, when, together with the reſt of the body, this moſt elaborate part of the ſyſtem alſo ſhall be diſſolved. Agreeably to this, it appears to me to have been clearly proved by Dr. Law and others, that after death there is not, upon the genuine chriſtian ſcheme, any life or hope till the reſurrection; and that, in the mean time, true chriſtians *ſleep in Jeſus*, and that *their life is hid with Chriſt in God*; ſo that *when Chriſt who is their life ſhall appear*, and not before, *they alſo ſhall appear with him in glory*. The contrary notion has manifeſtly been the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory, and of other groſs corruptions of the chriſtian ſcheme.

Notwithſtanding theſe, and other general arguments, it muſt be acknowledged that there are particular paſſages in the New Teſtament, which it is not eaſy for us, whoſe phraſeology is ſo very different from that of the Jews, to reconcile to the Socinian hypotheſis; as, indeed, there are particular texts, which it is difficult to reconcile to *any* hypotheſis. A regard to theſe texts kept me

me a long time attached to the Arian ſcheme; and after that, I was ſtill a conſiderable time in a ſtate of wavering and uncertainty between the two opinions; *general arguments* inclining me to the one, and *particular texts* to the other. From a more attentive view, however, of theſe texts, I am now fully ſatisfied that I had conceived a wrong notion of their genuine ſenſe, and that the ideas which I had always been accuſtomed to affix to them, were not ſuch as a Jew or a Greek, for whoſe uſe the books of the New Teſtament were written, would affix to them; and if you will indulge me, as you have hitherto done, I will very freely explain to your readers what appears to me to be the genuine ſenſe of ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture on which the Arians have laid much ſtreſs, in the controverſy that has ariſen upon this ſubject.

It is remarkable that the ſame texts affect different perſons very differently, and even the ſame perſon, at different times, ſo that what appeared difficult to me may have appeared tolerably eaſy to others. I ſhall, however, endeavour to explain thoſe which generally appeared the moſt unaccountable to myſelf, viz. thoſe in which Chriſt is repreſented as coming into the world, and leaving it again, eſpecially John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and, again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.*

From the firſt view of this paſſage any perſon would conclude, that Chriſt muſt have been with the Father before he came into this material world, as really and properly as he was with the Father after he left the world. And ſo I would ſtill

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underſtand it, uſing the term *world* in a ſenſe different from that abovementioned; but ſufficiently authorized by the ſcriptures, and even in paſſages exactly ſimilar to this. It is evident that the word here uſed κοσμος, does not always ſignify the world at large, or this part of the material ſyſtem; but that it is likewiſe uſed in ſeveral reſtrained ſenſes. More eſpecially by the world is often meant the world conſidered only as a *ſcene of buſineſs, exerciſe, and trial.* Nay we ourſelves familiarly uſe the ſame word in that ſenſe; as when we ſay a man has *not ſeen the world*, or been *in the world*, though, in fact, he has lived a long time in it.

Alſo, by the *world*, in the ſcriptures, we are often to underſtand *the wicked and profligate part of mankind*, who are in it; in oppoſition to the virtuous and the good, who, with reſpect to them, are conſidered as *not of the world*, or not making any part of it. *The world ſees me no more*, but *ye ſee me*, John xiv. 19; *The world will hate you*, xv. 18; *I pray not for the world*, xvii. 9; *The world knoweth us not*, 1 John iii. 1.

Now in theſe ſenſes of the word, Chriſt did not come into the world till he engaged in his public miniſtry; and accordingly, when his miniſtry was ended, he may be ſaid to have left the world, though he ſtill continued to reſide in this part of the material ſyſtem. Indeed, unleſs we do uſe the word in this ſenſe, or in ſome other that is ſimilar to it, it is impoſſible to interpret, conſiſtently with truth, our Lord's ſaying, *I am no more in the world*; for after his aſcenſion he was

was ſeen, if not by Stephen, at leaſt by Paul: and he has promiſed that he will be with his diſciples to the end of the world. There is no doubt, therefore, but that he is ſtill an inhabitant of the world, as much as ever he was, attending to the intereſts of his church, and of mankind. Beſides, the notion of a *local heaven*, ſomewhere above the clouds, and at a great diſtance from the earth, is altogether fanciful, and inconſiſtent with reaſon and philoſophy.

Since, therefore, Chriſt did not leave the *earth* at the time that he is ſaid to have left the *world*, but was only diſcharged from his ſtate of exerciſe and trial, there is no occaſion to ſuppoſe that he exiſted in any other place before he is ſaid to have been *ſent into the world.* We are only to conſider him as at that time entering on his ſtate of exerciſe and trial.

This interpretation, alſo, exactly correſponds to what our Saviour ſays concerning his diſciples. *As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I, alſo, ſent them into the world.* John xvii. 18. The apoſtles, therefore, are to be conſidered as not having been in the world, in our Saviour's ſenſe, till he ſent them into it; in the ſame manner as he himſelf was not properly in the world, till God gave him his commiſſion to preach in it. Since the miſſion of Chriſt and his apoſtles are, in this place, expreſsly ſaid to have been ſimilar, there can be no reaſon to ſuppoſe that one of them pre-exiſted, more than the other.

In this manner the paſſage above quoted appears to me to be perfectly conſiſtent with the belief

belief that Chriſt had no being before he was born of the Virgin Mary, though it is very poſſible that, had this interpretation, which appears ſo ſatisfactory to me now, been ſuggeſted to me ſome years ago, I ſhould have thought it a very unnatural one. But we ſhould not haſtily reject an interpretation of a text of ſcripture becauſe it appears unnatural on the firſt view; ſince what we fancy to be contrary to *reaſon*, may only be contrary to a long eſtabliſhed *prejudice* and prepoſſeſſion; and I doubt not but that every perſon, who has ſtudied the ſcriptures, can recolleſt ſeveral inſtances of his perfectly acquieſcing now in ſuch a ſenſe of particular texts, as appeared very unnatural to him ſometime ago. The Roman Catholics, no doubt, think it very unnatural to explain the words *This is my body*, in any other than in the moſt literal ſenſe.

When the general ſtrain of any diſcourſe is manifeſtly figurative, it is natural to expect that the whole ſhould be of a piece; and to interpret one part literally, and another part figuratively, is moſt likely to ſpoil the genuine ſenſe of the whole, and eſpecially if the paſſage in queſtion be introduced as ſomething not eaſy to be underſtood.

The diſcourſe of our Lord with Nicodemus is throughout highly figurative. Whatever reaſon our Lord might have for adopting ſuch a ſtyle on that occaſion, it is plain that this ruler of the Jews was exceedingly ſtaggered by our Lord's ſaying to him, that *he muſt be born again*. When Nicodemus replied to all that he thought proper

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to ſay upon the ſubject, *How can theſe things be?* Our Lord ſays, John iii. 10. *Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* And ver. 12. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?* After this introduction, we are naturally led to expect, that what follows ſhould be ſomething peculiarly difficult to underſtand, and ſo it muſt certainly have been to Nicodemus. It is this, ver. 13. *No man hath aſcended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven.* Now to ſuppoſe that Chriſt had actually been in a local heaven, at a diſtance from the earth, to which he was to return again, would make that part of the verſe very intelligible; and the latter part, *who is in heaven,* may poſſibly be an explanatory clauſe, written firſt in the margin (denoting that this event had then come to paſs, Chriſt being actually in heaven) and afterwards inſerted in the text. But the whole language will be figurative, and ſtill have a juſt and proper meaning, if it be underſtood of Chriſt's being peculiarly qualified to inſtruct mankind in things of a heavenly nature, on account of his maintaining the moſt intimate communion with his heavenly Father, even while he was on earth; the peculiar preſence of God making a heaven in any place.

It is poſſible that by theſe words our Lord might intend, by a ſhort alluſive and elliptical mode of ſpeaking, to remind Nicodemus of thoſe words of Moſes, Deut. xxx. 11. 14. and to intimate, that none but himſelf, who had received a ſpecial commiſſion for that purpoſe, could reveal the

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mind and will of God. The evangeliſt himſelf ſeems to allude to this ſaying of his Maſter, and to expreſs the ſenſe in which he underſtood it, ch. i. 18. *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son (which is in the boſom of the Father) he hath declared him.*

That long diſcourſe of Chriſt's, of which we have an account in the ſixth chapter of the goſpel of John, is alſo throughout highly figurative. It was ſo much ſo, that not only a great number of the Jews, but even moſt of his diſciples, except the twelve, were offended, and left him upon it. The multitude, to which this diſcourſe was addreſſed, were thoſe who had followed him on account of his miraculous feeding of them; and it is not improbable but that our Lord might intend by it to ſeparate thoſe who followed him from ſuch ſordid motives as theſe, from ſuch as attended him for the ſake of his inſtructions, and who would take pains to reflect upon, and endeavour to underſtand what he delivered. It is plain, however, that, in this diſcourſe, he tried the attachment of his followers to the utmoſt, eſpecially by his declaring, vi. 53. *Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* Perceiving that his diſciples murmured at this ſaying, and at others of a ſimilar nature, he ſays, ver. 61. *Doth this offend you? what and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?* Now, conſidering the figurative turn of the whole diſcourſe, we ſhould not expect that the concluſion of it, ſo introduced, would be a thing that was to be underſtood in its moſt obvious and literal ſenſe.

ſenſe. Taking it for granted, therefore, that there is ſomething figurative in the expreſſion, we may conjecture that Chriſt did not mean to ſay that he had literally been *above the clouds*, but only that he had been in the *councils of God*, which is generally ſuppoſed to be held above the clouds. And ſince, after the execution of this commiſſion, he ſhould give an account of it to him that ſent him, he muſt again be in that peculiar preſence of God, which conſtitutes heaven.

This language, I acknowledge, is rather harſh, but we may be the more reconciled to it, when we conſider that Solomon uſed a ſimilar expreſſion, in a ſenſe that is ſtill more harſh, when he ſays, ſpeaking of the conſequence of death, Eccl. xii. 7. *Then ſhall the duſt return to the earth as it was, and the ſpirit ſhall return unto God who gave it*; meaning, probably, not that the ſpirit ſhould actually go to God, or even have any ſeparate exiſtence at all; but only that God would extinguiſh, or, figuratively ſpeaking, *take away* that breath, or life, which he had given.

Perhaps the force of our Lord's expreſſion may lie in the word *ſee*, *i. e.* as they had already had abundance of *rational* evidence that he came from God, ſo hereafter *ocular* demonſtration ſhould be exhibited to them, when they ſhould *ſee* him aſcend up to heaven; after which they could have no doubt of his having had communication with God, and having been ſent of him.

Some

Some Thoughts on the Queſtion, whether it be in any Caſe, ſuppoſeable, that an honeſt and impartial Inquirer ſhould reſiſt the Evidences of Chriſtianity. In a Letter to a Friend, July 14, 1755. See Doddr. Lect. prop. 137. ſect. 5 and 6.

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH there are certainly many fine ſtrokes of ſatire in Dr. Young's *Centaur not fabulous*, in which he laſhes, with equal juſtneſs and ſeverity, that inordinate love of pleaſure, which ſeems to be the characteriſtic of the preſent age; and though I doubt not but there is generally a very cloſe connection between licentious practices, and licentious principles, as tending reciprocally to generate each other, "ſo that," as the doctor obſerves, "whoever would reduce one, muſt ſtrike at both;" yet I can hardly think they ſhould both be attacked in the ſame manner; nor do I imagine, indeed, that the method he uſes to make the infidel ſenſible of his errors, is likely to be attended with much ſucceſs. "It is impoſſible," he ſays, "for a good man to reject an offered "revelation, without inquiring into its title to "the high character it aſſumes; and for a rea-"ſonable man to reject the chriſtian revelation, "if he does: conſequently, he who continues a "deiſt, in a land enlightened by the goſpel, "muſt be wanting in goodneſs or reaſon; muſt "be either criminal or dull." And he farther ſays, that "the lives of deiſts cannot be good;

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"ſo that they are both criminal and dull," or, in other words, knaves and blockheads. This is, indeed, a very ſhort and plain method of dealing with them; but ſuch peremptory aſſertions, unſupported by ſolid arguments, may, I ſhould think, be juſtly called in queſtion, by the friends, as well as the enemies of revelation; and whatever kindneſs and charity may be the motive of his ſpeaking thus plainly to them, I cannot have any higher opinion of his judgment and prudence, than the Reviewers themſelves expreſs in their account of this treatiſe, which you think ſo highly exceptionable. (See Month. Rev. for May 1755. p. 385, 6.)

Whether the writer of that article be well or ill affected to chriſtianity, I ſhall not pretend to determine; but for my own part I very ſincerely declare, that the evidences of the chriſtian revelation appear to me ſufficiently ſtrong and clear to be the foundation of a firm and rational belief. And though I have been often puzzled and perplexed with the objections of infidels, or with difficulties that have preſented themſelves to my own mind, yet ſeldom have I thought them of weight enough to counter-balance thoſe poſitive proofs on which my faith is built. Nevertheleſs, as in numberleſs other caſes, where much has been alledged on both ſides of a complex and controverted ſubject, what appears very clear and certain to one, is ſeen in a quite different light by another, not leſs intelligent and honeſt; ſo even here, ſatisfied as I am with the reaſons of my own belief, I cannot take upon me to aſſert that they muſt appear equally ſatisfactory to every

other perſon that is not either very weak or very wicked.

I am far, indeed, from eſteeming the deiſts a wiſer generation than thoſe good chriſtians whom they are very apt to deſpiſe for their credulity; and am perſuaded that all freedom of thought is not ingroſſed by thoſe who are fond of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by the title of Free-thinkers. Yet it muſt ſurely argue either great ignorance, or ſtrong prejudice to deny, that ſeveral, uſually ranked in this claſs, have been men of very conſiderable abilities; and it would perhaps be too raſh to ſay, that none of them were ever ſincere in their inquiries after truth. Of their moral characters I can ſay little or nothing, on my own knowledge, any farther than may be collected from their writings; in many of which there are but too evident marks of great unfairneſs, prevarication, falſhood and malice. I know they are eſteemed to be, in general, as looſe in their morals as in their principles; nor can I help fearing, that they are moſtly ſuch as *love darkneſs better than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.* Yet that all who reject the chriſtian *revelation* muſt needs be bad men, and ſuch as pay no regard to the obligations of *natural religion*, is more than I can think myſelf warranted to affirm.

On the contrary, when I conſider the great difficulty of aſcertaining the meaning and deſign of thoſe O. T. prophecies, which are ſuppoſed to have been fulfilled in the life, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt; when I recollect the many lying wonders that have been palmed upon the world,

world, under the notion of miracles, in every age (ſome of them, too, by perſons of high repute for their ſanctity) and how hard it is to lay down any certain criteria by which they may be diſtinguiſhed from the true; when I think of thoſe pious frauds that were impudently forged by ſome, and too eaſily received by others, even in the earlieſt ages of the church; of the high claims and pretenſions that have been made by enthuſiaſts or impoſtors to divine inſpiration and revelations, from time to time, and of the great ſpread of falſe religions, as well as of that which we eſteem the true; it does not ſeem to me any way incredible that ſome wiſe and good minds, by attending too much to thoughts of this kind, may have imagined the external evidences of chriſtianity to be ſo far invalidated thereby, as to deſerve but little regard: though I really think them ſuch as will ſtand the teſt of the cloſeſt examination and compariſon.

I ſhould, indeed, think it the likelieſt and readieſt way to convince a religious deiſt of the truth of the goſpel revelation, to begin with thoſe internal evidences that are drawn from the purity of its morals; from the ſublimity, uſefulneſs, and efficacy of its doctrines, as conducive to our improvement in knowledge, and holineſs, and to our advancement to eternal glory and felicity; from the unparalleled excellency and amiableneſs of our Saviour's character in every reſpect, and that moſt remarkable ſimplicity, and unſhaken integrity, which his holy apoſtles manifeſted upon all occaſions; from the admirable harmony of the ſeveral parts of

the New Teſtament, and the general agreement of this laſt and beſt diſpenſation of religion with all the former, which are ſpoken of in the Old Teſtament, and appear to have been preparatory thereto. Theſe are circumſtances that render the religion of Jeſus worthy of all acceptation; and ſeem ſtrongly to point out its divine original: ſince it is certain that human wiſdom never produced a ſyſtem of religion and morality any way comparable to this; and without admitting the divine miſſion, inſtructions, and aſſiſtances of the author and publiſhers of chriſtianity, there is nothing that can account for their ſo far excelling all the ſages of antiquity, in their doctrine, precepts, and practice.

Such conſiderations as theſe ſhould not ſurely be ſlighted by the advocates of chriſtianity; ſince they cannot fail to make ſtrong impreſſions in its favour on all ſerious and well-diſpoſed minds. But, indeed, it is by taking the internal and external evidences in their proper connection with each other, that they both appear to the greateſt advantage; and, in this united view, they acquire ſuch an additional force, as one would think ſufficient to bear down all oppoſition. A religion ſo heavenly and divine in its nature, ſo advantageous and beneficial in its tendency, ſo ſuited to the ſtate and condition, to the neceſſities and circumſtances of mankind; was ſurely worthy to be introduced into the world, confirmed and propagated by ſome extraordinary interpoſitions of the Deity in its behalf. And as, on the one hand, it is very certain that none could really perform ſuch wonderful

derful works as are attributed to Chriſt and his apoſtles, unleſs God were with them of a truth; ſo on the other, it is not to be imagined, that perſons of their character, who could be influenced in what they did, and taught, only by views, the moſt pious, benevolent, and ſublime, ſhould pretend to be furniſhed with ſupernatural gifts and powers, which they never actually poſſeſſed. Nor, indeed, is it at all ſuppoſable, that a religion ſo oppoſite to the luſts and prejudices of mankind, and which, in fact, met with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition, very early, from the wit and learning, the power and policy of men, ſhould gain ſo ſpeedy and extenſive a ſpread, if it had not been founded on the moſt undeniable facts, and confirmed by the moſt irreſiſtible proofs, even by the demonſtration of the ſpirit, and the evident exertions of a divine power, which every where accompanied the firſt preachers of the goſpel, and gave a ſufficient ſanction even to its moſt peculiar doctrines.

On theſe, and ſuch like grounds, I think, a chriſtian's faith may very ſecurely reſt. Nevertheleſs, by thoſe who conſider them only in a partial and ſeparate view, it is poſſible, their ſtrength and ſolidity may be called in queſtion. And it muſt be acknowledged, after all that has been ſaid, concerning the reaſonableneſs and excellency of that ſcheme of religion, contained in the writings of the New Teſtament, and of their general agreement with thoſe of the Old, that there are abundance of difficulties to be met with in both, that have ſcarce ever been fully and ſatisfactorily ſolved. You are not un-

acquainted with thoſe objections which have been made to the truth of the ſcriptures in general, from no inconſiderable number of apparent contradictions that are to be found therein; and more eſpecially to the divine authority of the Old Teſtament, from a variety of paſſages that are conſidered as either abſurd or immoral; and, notwithſtanding all the pains that have been taken to remove them, you muſt own, that ſome of theſe objections are ſuch as may ſtill greatly perplex an inquiſitive mind. And yet the vindication of theſe ancient records, is a matter of no ſmall concern to the credit of the goſpel, on account of their cloſe, and, in ſeveral reſpects, inſeparable connection therewith. Nor is the New Teſtament itſelf wholly free from objections of this nature. For though a great part of it is clear and intelligible enough, and the main tenor of its doctrines and precepts perfectly conſiſtent with the dictates of our own underſtanding and conſcience; yet ſuch is the obſcurity of many paſſages, as ſeems naturally to have given riſe to thoſe numerous and miſchievous controverſies, which have diſtracted the minds of chriſtians, and ſtirred up their animoſity againſt each other in every age; and it is well known that ſyſtems of doctrine moſt repugnant to reaſon, moſt diſhonourable to God, and deſtructive to the great ends of all religion (ſuch as could never be ſufficiently warranted by any pretenſions of a divine revelation, whatever credentials might be alledged for their ſupport) have been built on a miſtaken interpretation of various texts, which in their moſt obvi-

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ous ſenſe might ſeem to favour them. Now though, by the labours of learned and judicious critics, many of the difficulties here hinted at have been ſufficiently cleared up, and ſome thoughts ſuggeſted, which may, at leaſt in a general way, account for thoſe that ſtill remain; and though ſince a more rational method of interpreting the ſcriptures has been introduced, they have been pretty well freed from the charge of countenancing thoſe abſurd, pernicious, and contradictory notions that have too commonly been fathered upon them; yet it is no wonder if ſome ſincere inquirers after ſacred truth, for want of being directed to the happieſt method of purſuing their inquiries, have eſteemed theſe difficulties unſurmountable, and the objections thence ariſing againſt the chriſtian revelation, conſiderable enough to outweigh all the force of the oppoſite evidence.

My own experience of the embarraſſments into which I have ſometimes been plunged on this ſcore, and the candid acknowledgments of far wiſer and better men, of the ſtrong temptations to infidelity, with which they have been aſſaulted (ſee particularly *Baxter's preface to his Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion*, and *Dr. Watts's ſolemn Addreſs to the Deity, on occaſion of what he had written in the Trinitarian Controverſy*) make me think it, at leaſt poſſible, that ſome may have laboured under great doubts and uncertainties to the end of their lives, or even preferred religious deiſm to chriſtianity, eſpecially in thoſe corrupt or very imperfect forms under which it has too commonly been exhibited, and yet have

preſerved ſo much ſincerity of heart, and integrity of life, as not to forfeit their intereſt in the divine favour.

I confeſs, that were we to argue *a priori*, one might naturally conclude, that if a Divine Revelation was given to men, it would be attended with ſuch evidence, as muſt certainly convince every fair and honeſt inquirer. But arguments of this kind will, I fear, bear no very great ſtreſs. For, by a like method of reaſoning, one might be ready to conclude, that if a revelation of ſuch truths as are of general importance and uſe, was made at all, it would have been univerſal; that its evidences would have been much ſtronger than they are actually found to be, or at leaſt that it would not have been attended with ſo many difficulties, or liable to ſuch ſtrong objections, as we muſt be ſenſible of, unleſs we are reſolved to wink very hard indeed. But, after all, we muſt be content to take the goſpel revelation as we find it; whether it be ſuch as, by our previous reaſonings, we might be ready to expect or no. And, for my own part, I doubt not but it is altogether worthy of the Divine Wiſdom, though its nature and circumſtances are, in ſeveral reſpects, ſuch as man's wiſdom would ſcarcely have dictated, and may not even be able fully to account for, any more than for a variety of appearances in nature, and occurrences in providence. Nor do I doubt but it has been productive of great good to the world already, and will hereafter be of much greater, though one can ſcarce help wondering that its beneficial effects

ſects have been hitherto no more extenſive and conſpicuous.

As for thoſe words of our bleſſed Lord which you quote, *If any man do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf.* They do, indeed, plainly intimate, that the religion which he taught, was ſuch in its nature and evidences, as was well fitted to approve itſelf to honeſt and well diſpoſed minds; and that "the correſpondence "which a truly good man muſt find between "the whole ſyſtem of Chriſt's doctrine, and "his own inward experience, muſt be to him "inſtead of a thouſand ſpeculative arguments "in its favour." (See *Doddr. in Loc.*) And this, likewiſe, when he warns men of the danger of rejecting his teſtimony, and perſiſting in unbelief; this muſt be acknowledged to imply, that the oppoſition which his goſpel met with, at leaſt upon its firſt publication (when, perhaps, its evidence was ſtrongeſt) argued ſomething ſo perverſe and criminal in its oppoſers, as, *in the general*, to render them worthy of the condemnation he denounced againſt them.

Theſe denunciations, it is true, have been ſometimes objected againſt, as harſh and ſevere; but the righteouſneſs and reaſonableneſs of them may, I ſuppoſe, be vindicated by conſidering, on the one hand, how clearly the goſpel was propoſed, and how ſtrongly it was atteſted and confirmed by the firſt preachers of it; and on the other, the deplorable corruptions of religion that then almoſt univerſally prevailed, amongſt both Jews and Gentiles; and the little reaſon there

there was to hope for the repentance and reformation of thoſe who wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt that glorious light which then broke in upon the world; and deprived themſelves of the religious helps and advantages with which the goſpel would have furniſhed them. Taking the matter in this view (as Mr. Morris, in his ſermon on this ſubject, has argued more at large) there could be no injuſtice in the condemnation of ſuch perſons; their unbelief being, itſelf, a wilful ſin, attended with great and aggravated guilt; and the puniſhment threatened being but the natural and unavoidable conſequence of this unbelief. And if the condemnation of ſuch unbelievers would be juſt and neceſſary, it was but an act of mercy to warn them of the danger of harbouring thoſe ſinful prejudices, and continuing in thoſe ſinful practices; which would prove ſo fatal in their conſequences. The threatening certainly was not deſigned to engage them to believe, without evidence, or to profeſs to believe what they did not (though thus the author of *Chriſtianity not founded on argument*, would diſingenuouſly repreſent the matter;) but only to induce them fairly to attend to the truths delivered by our bleſſed Lord and his apoſtles, and to the evidences whereby they were confirmed; honeſtly to own the convictions of their minds, and conſcientiouſly to practiſe accordingly.

However, we might perhaps go beyond the deſign of our Saviour in theſe paſſages, ſhould we aſſert that no truly-honeſt and well-diſpoſed mind could remain in unbelief, even at that time,

time, in thoſe places where the goſpel was preached and publiſhed. The caſe of St. Paul, before his miraculous converſion, ſeems to ſhew the contrary. Much leſs would I take upon me to affirm, that thoſe declarations which he made, with reſpect to ſuch as were eye and ear-witneſſes to his life, doctrine and miracles, are equally applicable to us, who muſt take all that is related concerning him, on the credit of human teſtimony and tradition, which, however highly credible, muſt fall ſhort of abſolute infallibility; who live in an age wherein his pure and holy religion has been ſo much ſophiſticated and diſguiſed by the corrupt gloſſes of men, that it is not eaſy to know what he taught, or to ſay which of the many contending parties of chriſtians beſt deſerves the name; who, though we hear much of chriſtianity, ſee very little of its native charms in the lives of its profeſſors; and who, even though we ſhould pay too little regard to the authority of ſcripture, are furniſhed with much more complete ſyſtems of natural religion and morality (which may juſtly be conſidered as the grand baſis of chriſtianity itſelf) than the pagan world could ever boaſt of; and this, without the incumbrance of Jewiſh rites and ceremonies, which, though wiſely adapted to the genius and circumſtances of that people for a ſeaſon, they were very apt to lay a diſproportionate ſtreſs upon, to the neglect of the weightier matters of their law.

For this advantage, indeed, I doubt not but we are principally indebted to the light of the goſpel. Nevertheleſs it ſeems no way unlikely that ſome, who are not duly ſenſible from whence it is derived

derived, may make a good uſe of it. And I cannot but think, that a life formed upon the principles laid down in *Wollaſton's Religion of Nature*, for inſtance, might be as acceptable to God, and as uſeful to men, and bid as fair for being followed by a bliſsful immortality; as one formed, I will not ſay by the documents of a Popiſh directory, but even, according to the inſtitutes of a Calvin, or a Turretin. Upon the whole, though I am thoroughly ſatisfied that a ſincere and rational chriſtian, as ſuch, enjoys far greater advantages than any one elſe, for ſo knowing and doing the will of God, as to be happy in his favour both here and hereafter; which advantages can never be deſpiſed without danger, or neglected without detriment; yet of this truth I am equally certain, that God is no reſpecter of perſons, but that every one who feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs, by whatever means he is formed to this happy diſpoſition and conduct, is accepted of him, and ſhall be finally rewarded by him.

CHARISTES.

Obſervations on Chriſt's Agony in the Garden.

IT was an opinion adopted very early in the chriſtian church, and the apoſtle John conſiders it as a dangerous one, 1 John iv. 3. that Chriſt did not *come in the fleſh*, and, conſequently, did not *feel* as other men do in ſimilar ſituations. He even ſcruples not to declare that this opinion was of *antichriſt*, ſavouring of that

that great corruption, which by the ſpirit of prophecy, he knew was to be introduced into chriſtianity. The author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, alſo lays great ſtreſs on the conſideration of Chriſt's having had a perfectly *fellow feeling of our infirmities*. It muſt be of importance, therefore, to ſhew, from circumſtances in the hiſtory of Chriſt, that, with reſpect both to his body and mind, he was affected exactly as other men are.

Such obſervations are alſo of importance to the internal evidence of chriſtianity, as they ſhew that the deſcriptions of the evangeliſts were made from *real life*, ſuch as we now ſee it to be. For had they feigned, and written from their imaginations only, they would certainly, ignorant as they were in philoſophy, have made ſome blunders, and have advanced things which, in the preſent advanced ſtate of knowledge, we ſhould be ſenſible were unnatural and abſurd.

One of the moſt extraordinary circumſtances in the hiſtory of our Lord, is his *bloody ſweat* in the garden, on the evening before he ſuffered, mentioned Luke xxii. 44. It is ſo extraordinary, that no perſon writing a fiction can be ſuppoſed to have thought of it, or, if he had thought of it, to have inſerted it, it being probable that the like had never been obſerved before. At leaſt, the appearance muſt have been very rare, and conſequently muſt have appeared very liable to objection. That the thing, however, is poſſible, in a very lax or diſeaſed ſtate of body, will not be denied. Nay, I believe that the tranſudation of blood through the glands

of

of the ſkin, is not an uncommon morbid appearance. There is an account of two remarkable caſes of this nature in the *Acta Phyſico-Medica Norimbergæ*, Vol. 8. p. 428. one of a boy, of a lax habit of body, who often had bloody ſweats, after having been ſubject to violent convulſive and ſpaſmodic affections; and the other of a man of about thirty years of age, in a ſimilar ſituation. But that this effect may be the conſequence of great *perturbation of mind*, has not, as far as I know, been completely illuſtrated, by the obſervation of any thing ſimilar to it in the hiſtory of human nature. I have, however, met with a caſe approaching pretty nearly to it, in the work quoted above, Vol. 1. p. 84.

We are there informed, that one Joachim Scacerna, of Ferrare, a perſon of ſixty-two years of age, and in perfect health, being exceedingly affected with the accuſation of a crime, of which he declared that he was perfectly innocent, was obſerved by a friend of his, to whom he was lamenting his misfortune, to ſhed tears like blood. Being thrown into priſon, his tears were more bloody. This ſymptom was followed by a rigidity over his whole body, and this by a malignant fever, which carried him off in three days.

That ſome men will *ſweat* with agony of mind, is a fact as well known, as that others have *ſhed tears* in a ſimilar ſtate. If, therefore, tears can be tinged with blood, when the mind is uncommonly agitated, the ſweat may be ſo too. Suppoſing our Lord to have been, in all reſpects, a *man*, it cannot be thought improba-

ble,

ble, that his mind ſhould have been thrown into the greateſt poſſible agitation on the near approach of his ſufferings, of which and of all the painful and ignominious circumſtances attending them, he had a diſtinct fore-knowledge; though at a diſtance he had always been able to view them with ſteadineſs and compoſure. Even a momentary pain, and of trifling conſequence, ſuch as attends the drawing of a tooth, of which we have a diſtinct apprehenſion beforehand, affects the minds of ſome perſons in a moſt extraordinary manner. The pain itſelf when it does arrive (and the ſame may be ſaid of evils of any other kind) is nothing in compariſon of the feelings which have preceded it. It may be obſerved, however, that before the agony in the garden, and even before the laſt ſupper, our Lord's mind was much diſturbed in the contemplation of his approaching death. John xii. 27. *Now is my ſoul troubled.*

Our Lord muſt have felt the more, as his ſituation was, in many reſpects, quite ſingular and unexampled, which was not the caſe with any of his followers. Beſides, his mind muſt have ſuffered extremely in the conflict between the oppoſite ideas of his ſufferings and death on the one hand, and of his immediate reſurrection and the very high degree of glory and power to which he was to be exalted on the other. The expectation of ſuffering only, with a remote proſpect of advantage, would not, perhaps, have agitated the mind ſo much.

The bloody ſweat is certainly an argument that our Lord's whole *nervous ſyſtem* was exceedingly

ingly diſordered; and it is well known that no bodily indiſpoſitions are attended with ſuch diſtreſs and horror of mind as thoſe which are called nervous. The miraculous relief which he received was probably adapted to this circumſtance of his caſe, without which it might have been naturally impoſſible for him to have gone through his approaching trial and ſufferings with the requiſite compoſure, which we ſee he inſtantly attained, and uniformly preſerved. Nay, without this interpoſition, ſo violent a diſorder of the whole animal ſyſtem might have terminated in death; ſo that what our Lord ſays might be literally true, Matt. xxvi. 38. *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.*

The *cup* which our Lord prayed might paſs from him was, moſt probably, this very bodily indiſpoſition, and the diſtreſs of mind which it occaſioned; as it could not be the ſuffering of death on the croſs, with which he had always expreſſed the moſt perfect ſatisfaction. This, indeed, he knew to have been abſolutely neceſſary to the great purpoſe of his miſſion, and for his acquieſcence in which, chiefly, he was the object of his Father's approbation, *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life.* John x. 17, 18.

To this agony in the garden, the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews probably alluded, when he ſays, v. 7. that *Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh, offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries and tears, unto him that was able to ſave him from death,* and was heard, in that he

he feared, or rather on account of his *piety* and reſignation.

I cannot help thinking, however, but that it may be inferred from our Lord's exceeding great diſtreſs upon this occaſion, that he was but a *man*, and had not attained to that perfect *comprehenſion of mind*, which a being of a ſuperior nature, who had exiſted many thouſand years before he came into this world, muſt have acquired, even though his faculties ſhould not, originally, have been greater than ours. For then the ideas of his approaching ſufferings and of his future glory, would have been intimately aſſociated, and, the latter far over-powering the former, the ſtate of his mind, in the expectation of them both, as one, would have been pleaſing and happy upon the whole. So extraordinary a circumſtance as a bloody ſweat argues the moſt vehement perturbation of mind, even in the moſt delicate conſtitution (the hiſtorian calls it an *agony*) and though ſuch a violent mental affection be very ſuitable to the nature of man, and what perhaps might be expected, in a ſituation ſo ſingularly alarming, and critical, it can hardly be thought compatible with ſuperangelic natures. For the illuſtration of this argument I muſt beg leave to refer your readers to ſome of my former obſervations which you have publiſhed in the firſt number of this preſent volume.

As the man who ſhed the bloody tears ſoon died of a diſeaſe, which that circumſtance preceded, it is not impoſſible but that our Lord might be ſo far weakened by this agony of his mind that, together with his ſevere ſcourgings,

and the inſults which he received before he was led to crucifixion, and in his way thither, his vital powers might be much ſooner exhauſted than thoſe of the two thieves; which will account for his dying a natural death before them, at which Pilate expreſſed ſo much ſurprize. I own that I am extremely unwilling to ſuppoſe that Chriſt, who never worked any other miracle in favour of himſelf, exerted a miraculous power, in order to put an end to his own life, before the time in which the tortures he endured would have effected it. The *loud cry* which he uttered juſt before he expired, may have been the effect of the convulſions with which it is not improbable he was ſeized in his laſt moments. The rigidity with which Scacerna was ſeized, before his putrid fever, muſt alſo have been of a ſpaſmodic or convulſive nature.

CLEMENS.

A Criticiſm on Gal. i. 10.

For do I now perſuade *men or* God?

OUR tranſlation of this text is evidently harſh. Some would render it *obey*, and this, no doubt, is good ſenſe; but every Weſtminſter ſcholar knows that the noun, in that caſe, ſhould have been a dative. As to any other interpretations they are beneath notice. I would render it, *Do we recommend men or God?* In ſupport of this ſenſe, vid. *Porphyry de Abſtinentia*, l. 3. ſect. 27. towards the end of that ſection.

ſection. "Injuſtice," ſaith he, hath a pecu-
"liar dexterity in recommending, or to re-
"commend herſelf, (πειθειν εαυτην) and to cor-
"rupt her votaries." This is not a common ſenſe of the word, but I think it ſhould be ſo tranſlated in the juſt-mentioned text. If any of the learned writers in the *Repoſitory* are of a different opinion; at leaſt this new ſenſe of the word πειθειν may be agreeable to them as a curioſity. For I believe it is not to be found either in Stevens, or either of his Supplements: If you like better to have the whole paſſage, take the following free tranſlation, viz. "Injuſtice
"hath a peculiar addreſs in recommending, or
"to recommend herſelf (πειθειν εαυτην) and to cor-
"rupt thoſe who are enſlaved by her, becauſe
"ſhe generally attends upon and makes court
"to her darling with pleaſure in her train."

——r.

THE

Theological Repoſitory.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

Although you have already inſerted in your collection ſeveral papers, of your other correſpondents, on the ſubject of ATONEMENT, yet the following diſſertation may, perhaps, be thought not unworthy the attention of your readers, as it enters more deeply into that queſtion, and places it in a different light. It is, however, ſubmitted to your diſpoſal, by your obliged humble ſervant,

EUSEBIUS.

IN order to form right conceptions on the ſubject of *atonement*, a ſubject which appears to be of ſo conſiderable importance both in the old and new diſpenſations, and which hath given ſo much employment to the thoughts and pens of divines; I conceive it will be a proper method to trace the ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture where it is ſpoken of, and conſider carefully the occaſions whereon, and the purpoſes for which atonement is required, or ſaid to have been made.

made. This I ſhall attempt in the following eſſay.

God having promiſed to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. *I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy ſeed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee, the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion; and I will be their God*; and having fulfilled that other promiſe, Gen. xv. 14. *Alſo that nation, whom they ſhall ſerve, will I judge; and afterwards ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance*, by delivering the people of Iſrael out of Egypt, *with a mighty hand, and an outſtretched arm*, he formed them into a national community under his own extraordinary direction and protection, and thus took them *to be a peculiar people to himſelf above all nations that were upon the earth*. Deut. xiv. 2.

To this end he commanded Moſes, Exod. xxv. 8, 9. *Let them make me a ſanctuary, that I may dwell amongſt them. According to all that I ſhew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the inſtruments thereof, even ſo ſhall ye make it.* And he promiſed, chap. xxix. 43. &c. *There will I meet with the children of Iſrael, and the tabernacle ſhall be ſanctified by my glory. And I will ſanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will ſanctify alſo both Aaron and his ſons, to miniſter to me in the prieſts office. And I will dwell among the children of Iſrael, and will be their God, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord their God,*

that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among ſt them: I am the Lord their God. Accordingly, when the tabernacle and all things belonging to it were finiſhed, ſet up, diſpoſed in their proper places, and anointed with the holy oil, we are told, chap. xl. 34. *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, &c.*

When ſuch a connection was eſtabliſhed between God, as *ſovereign*, *king* and *God*, and the people of Iſrael, as his *ſubjects*, *people* and *worſhippers*, by a viſible ſymbol of his glorious preſence in the midſt of them, reſiding in a royal pavilion, it became highly expedient that a certain *ritual*, containing ordinances of external ſervices, ſhould be appointed to regulate the intercourſe of theſe ſubjects with their ſovereign, of this people with their God; and that proper officers ſhould be ſet apart to attend upon the royal preſence, perform the ſervices of the court, and conduct or manage the intercourſe of the people with *the Lord their God.*

This ritual, we find, is very particular and preciſe, and an exact obſervance of its ſeveral injunctions is required upon very conſiderable and even ſevere penalties; in order, probably, to inſpire the people with deeper reverence for the great God, their ſovereign, and to make them more careful in obeying his laws.

In this ritual we find certain atonements preſcribed on various occaſions, and for divers purpoſes. Let us endeavour to reduce them under proper heads.

Section I.

WE find *atonements* appointed and uſed at the firſt *dedication*, or *conſecration*, of things and perſons to the ſervice of God; whereby *things* were ſolemnly appropriated, or ſet a part to be ſolely employed in that ſervice; and *perſons* were inveſted with, and acknowledged to have a *right* or *privilege*, to attend upon, and perform the appointed acts of religious worſhip, or other ſervices allotted to them, according to their ſtation, office and rank, and ſo became in a correſpondent degree *holy*. Thus,

1. At the time that Moſes was directed to conſecrate Aaron and his ſons to the prieſts office, he was commanded alſo to make a particular atonement for the *altar*, each day during the ſeven days of their conſecration.

Exod. xxix. 36, 37. *And thou ſhalt offer every day, a bullock for a ſin-offering, for atonement: and thou ſhalt cleanſe the altar, when thou haſt made an atonement for it, and thou ſhalt anoint it to ſanctify it.*

Seven days thou ſhalt make an atonement for the altar, and ſanctify it: and it ſhall be an altar moſt holy; whatſoever toucheth the altar ſhall be holy.

Accordingly when Moſes proceeded to this ſolemn tranſaction, we are told, Levit. viii. 11. that *he ſprinkled of the anointing oil upon the altar ſeven times, and anointed the altar, and all its veſſels—to ſanctify them.* Then, ver. 14, 15. *He brought the bullock for the ſin-offering—and ſlew it: and Moſes took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and*

purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and ſanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

2. *Atonement* is mentioned alſo in the order which was given for the conſecration of *Aaron* and *his ſons* to the prieſts office.

Exod. xxix. 33. *And they ſhall eat thoſe things wherewith the atonement was made, to conſecrate and to ſanctify them*—and when this order was executed, Moſes charged them, Levit. viii. 34. *As he hath done this day, ſo the Lord hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.*

3. At the dedication of the Levites unto their office and miniſtry, an order was given to make *atonement* for them.

Num. viii. 12. *And the Levites ſhall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou ſhalt offer the one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites.* Agreeably to this order it is added, ver. 21. *And Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanſe them.*

Laſtly. After the dedication of the tabernacle and altar, with what belonged to them, and the conſecration of Aaron and his ſons for ſeven days were completed, on the next day there ſeems to have been a ſolemn ſanctification of the whole people of Iſrael to the ſervice of God; at leaſt, at the firſt act of worſhip which the new high-prieſt performed on their account, and in their name, we are told he made *atonement* for them.

Levit. ix. 7. *And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, Go unto the altar—and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them.* But perhaps

ſome

ſome may think that this caſe ought to have been claſſed under the next head: It is however not material.

Section II.

THEY who were thus ſolemnly conſecrated, or devoted to the ſervice of God, and thereby inveſted with a right or privilege of approaching into his preſence, and performing or attending on acts of religious worſhip, might freely exerciſe and enjoy that right, not only in the ſtated and enjoined ſervices of the tabernacle, whether at the daily ſacrifices, or on the more ſolemn feſtival occaſions, but alſo might preſent themſelves, and offer free-will offerings whenever they pleaſed; yet on theſe purely voluntary occaſions, we find atonements ordered and made; which therefore, I think, muſt be conſidered as a formal acknowledgment of the privilege they claim, and a declaration of acceptance of them in the exerciſe of it. Thus,

1. We find that Aaron, by the direction of Moſes, the next day after his conſecration was completed, offered extraordinary ſacrifices, firſt for himſelf and then for the people, and made atonements for both. Levit. ix. 7. *And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, Go unto the altar and offer thy ſin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyſelf and for the people, and for thy houſe, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as* (*i. e.* in the manner as) *the Lord commanded.* How Aaron performed this, is very particularly deſcribed in the

the following verſes, and the extraordinary manner in which God manifeſted his acceptance of this firſt act of his ſolemn ſervice, by the miniſtry of his new high-prieſt is related in the cloſe of the chapter. Under this claſs, I apprehend, we ought to reckon the atonements appointed for all the people, when aſſembled at the great feſtivals. Thus on the firſt day of the feaſt of unleavened bread, among other ſacrifices, there is ordered, Numb. xxviii. 22. *One goat for a ſin-offering to make an atonement for you.* And this, as well as the reſt, was to be repeated each day of that feaſt. So on the day of offering the firſt fruits, ver. 30. *One kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.* In like manner at the feaſt of trumpets, on the firſt day of the ſeventh month, chap. xxix. 5. *One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering to make an atonement for you.*

2. If any perſon among the people thought proper to bring a burnt-ſacrifice of the herd or of the flock, it was thus ordered, Levit. i. 3, 4. *He ſhall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: And he ſhall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it ſhall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.* In what manner the atonement was made, in this, and all other caſes, whether by ſome form of words pronounced by the prieſt; or, rather, by the very act of ſprinkling the blood of the ſacrifice upon the altar, is uncertain.

SECTION

Section III.

WHEN a viſible glorious ſymbol of the divine preſence and majeſty, had thus taken a fixed reſidence among the people, in the holy place, the proper officers being appointed, and the order of external ſervices regulated, by which the people might pay their attendance on, and perform acceptable ſervice to their God and King, it became evidently fit and neceſſary, that the whole of this ſervice ſhould be conducted with great exactneſs, according to the beſt ideas of propriety and decorum, at that time received among men. Thus as it was univerſally acknowledged to be decent, that, when an inferior waited on his ſuperior, he ſhould make ſome preſent, or offering, to beſpeak a favourable acceptance, ſo it was commanded the Iſraelites, *that none ſhould appear before the Lord empty.* Exodus xxiii. 15. Hence alſo it was ſo often inſiſted on, that every thing which was ſacrificed to the Lord ſhould be free from blemiſh, and we find God thus expoſtulating by the prophet Malachi, i. 8. *If ye offer the blind for ſacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* And, in regard to the firſtlings of their flocks and herds, which were to be conſidered as indiſpenſably devoted to God, be they what they would, and by no means to be exchanged, it was ordered, Deut. xv. 21. *If there be any blemiſh therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill*

ill blemiſh, thou ſhalt not ſacrifice it unto the Lord thy God; thou ſhalt eat it within thy gates.— Hence alſo it was expreſsly ordered, Levit. xxi. 17—23. that none of the ſeed of Aaron ſhould perform the ſervices of the prieſthood, but perſons free from blemiſhes, and of comely appearances, *that he prophane not my ſanctuaries.* And, in the former part of the ſame chapter, proviſion is made to preſerve the prieſts, and eſpecially the high-prieſt, from thoſe pollutions, or other diſgraceful circumſtances, which would render them incapable or improper, to perform the functions of their miniſtry before God, or would reflect diſhonour on thoſe functions.

In like manner, circumſtances muſt often happen to the people, which would render it very improper and indecent (according to the ſentiments of mankind at that time) that they ſhould attend upon, or perform any of the ſolemn ſervices before the *auguſt preſence*, or glorious ſymbol of the Divine Majeſty. Theſe circumſtances might ariſe from natural and bodily infirmities, from accidents, from providential events, from tranſgreſſions of divine injunctions, through ignorance or inadvertence, or from other inſtances of miſbehaviour. While theſe circumſtances continued, the perſons affected by them, were excluded from attending on the tabernacle ſervice; but when theſe were removed, they were permitted again to approach the preſence, to offer an appointed ſacrifice, and have an *atonement* made for them, which atonement ſeems to have been *reconciliatory* or *declarative* of their *reſtoration*, or re-admiſſion to the

the rights and privileges of attending on the public ſervice of God's holy place, and a removal of the *incapacity* they had lain under.

But, before we enter on a particular conſideration of the ſeveral caſes of this kind, it will be proper to take notice of a very ſingular one, which may be ranked moſt naturally under this claſs, *i. e.* the caſe of a plague of leproſy breaking out in a houſe, in relation to which, very particular directions are given (Levit. xiv. 33. and following verſes) what methods the prieſts ſhall employ for removing the complaint; and, if theſe ſucceed, for cleanſing the houſe: and, in concluſion, it is ſaid, v. 53. *And he ſhall make atonement for the houſe, and it ſhall be clean*; *i. e.* it ſhall be reſtored to a capacity of being inhabited by the people of God.

Let us now proceed to conſider the ſeveral caſes wherein atonements ſeem to have been directed by way of *reconciliation*, or re-admiſſion of perſons, who had been under ſome incapacity or forfeiture, to the privileges of the tabernacle ſervice.

1. In the caſe of a cured leper, beſides many other ceremonies of purgation, ſacrifices are appointed, in the offering up of which, various ceremonies were to be uſed, much reſembling thoſe which were appointed for the conſecration of a prieſt, particularly Levit. xiv. 18, 19, 20. *And the remnant of the oil, that is in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed*; *and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the Lord. And the prieſt ſhall offer the ſin-offering, and make an atonement for him that*

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is to be cleanſed from his uncleanneſs, and afterward he ſhall kill the burnt-offering: And the prieſt ſhall offer the burnt-offering and the meat-offering upon the altar; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, and he ſhall be clean. Here ſeems to be a triple atonement in a ſingle caſe.

If the perſon were poor, a leſs expenſive ſacrifice was appointed for him, viz. ver. 21. *One lamb for a treſpaſs-offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him,* &c. yet here alſo it is ordered, ver. 29. *And the reſt of the oil that is in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall put upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed, to make an atonement for him before the Lord.* Ver. 30. *And he ſhall offer the one of the turtle doves, or of the young pigeons, ſuch as he can get.* Ver. 31. *Even ſuch as he is able to get, the one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him that is cleanſed, before the Lord.* Here alſo a three-fold atonement is made in a ſingle caſe.

2. Let us next ſee what was ordered in the caſe of a man who was cured of a running iſſue, Levit. xv. Beſides other purgations during ſeven days, it is commanded, ver. 14. *On the eighth day he ſhall take to him two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the prieſt.* Ver. 15. *And the prieſt ſhall offer them, the one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the Lord, for his iſſue.*

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3. In the caſes of a man cured of ſeminal diſorders, and of a woman recovered from præternatural menſtruations, which had rendered them for ſome time unclean, and conſequently unfit to come to the tabernacle, a like ſacrifice is required, and ver. 30. *The prieſt ſhall make atonement for her before the Lord, for the iſſue of her uncleanneſs.*

4. In the caſe of a woman in child-bed it is ſaid, Levit. xii. 2. *According to the days of her ſeparation for her infirmity ſhall ſhe be unclean.* And again, ver. 4. *She ſhall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the ſanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.* And then, ver. 6. *She ſhall bring a lamb of the firſt year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a ſin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the prieſt.* 7. *Who ſhall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her, and ſhe ſhall be cleanſed from the iſſue of her blood.* 8. *And if ſhe be not able to bring a lamb, then ſhe ſhall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a ſin-offering; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for her, and ſhe ſhall be clean.*

5. It will be proper to bring in here the caſe of a defiled Nazarite, as it is purely an accidental caſe; and yet an atonement for it is enjoined.

Numb. vi. 9. *If any man die very ſuddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his conſecration, then he ſhall ſhave his head in the day of his cleanſing, on the ſeventh day ſhall he ſhave it.* 10. *And on the eighth day he ſhall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons to the prieſt, to the door of the*

the tabernacle of the congregation. 11. *And the prieſt ſhall offer the one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he ſinned by the dead, and ſhall hallow his head that ſame day.* 12. *But the days that were before ſhall be loſt, becauſe his ſeparation was defiled.*

Thus far we have conſidered atonements enjoined to remove ceremonial incapacities, ariſing from natural infirmities, bodily diſorders, the ordinary courſe of nature, and accidental events, and to reſtore the interrupted rights and privileges of God's people to worſhip him in the tabernacle. Let us now proceed,

6. To atonements appointed for ſins of ignorance, *i. e.* for thoſe who really had tranſgreſſed ſome of the commandments of the Lord, but, at the time, were ignorant of the command, or of its import and meaning, or were not appriz-ed that they had violated it. When ſuch perſons came to be better informed afterwards concerning the tranſgreſſion they were chargeable with, they could not conſider themſelves as in a proper ſtate for coming into the preſence of God, and engaging in his ſervice acceptably; for their relief, therefore, atonements were appointed to remove the incapacity, and reſtore them to their former privileges. Theſe were different, according to the quality or rank of the offender.

1. Levit. iv. 27. *If any one of the common people ſin through ignorance, while he doth ſomewhat againſt any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ought not to be done, and*

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be guilty. Ver. 28. *Or if his ſin which he hath ſinned come to his knowledge; then he ſhall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemiſh, for his ſin which he hath ſinned.* When this is offered in the proper manner, ver. 31. *The prieſt ſhall make atonement for him, and it ſhall be forgiven him.* Or, if he bring a lamb for a ſin-offering, the ſame rites are required, and ver. 35. *The prieſt ſhall make an atonement for his ſin that he hath committed, and it ſhall be forgiven him.*

Several particular caſes, which ſeem to come under this head, are mentioned and provided for, Levit. v. particularly ver. 1. He who being examined upon oath, as evidence concerning any thing he had *ſeen or known, if he doth not utter it, then he ſhall bear his iniquity.* By which ſeems *not* to be intended, a perſon who wilfully and knowingly withholds evidence of the truth in judicial caſes; but one who, through want of recollection or inadvertence, fails to give a full and true evidence, and afterwards recollects that failure. The other caſes with which this is coupled, lead us to this interpretation; beſides, that to withhold evidence in ſuch caſes, manifeſtly comes within the compaſs of that general rule, I ſhall hereafter take notice of, *the ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly*, &c. Again, ver. 2, 3. If a perſon touch any unclean thing, *and it be hidden from him, when he knoweth of it, then he ſhall be guilty.* Alſo, ver. 4. If a perſon violate an engagement or vow, pronounced with an oath, *and it be hid from him, when he knoweth of it, then he ſhall be guilty in one of theſe.* Wherefore, ver. 5. *He ſhall confeſs that he hath ſinned in*

that thing. Ver. 6. *And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the Lord, a lamb, or a kid for a ſin-offering, and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ſin.* Ver. 7. *If he be not able to bring a lamb, he ſhall bring two turtle doves, or two young pigeons.* Ver. 10. *And the prieſt ſhall make atonement for him, for his ſin which he hath ſinned, and it ſhall be forgiven him.* Ver. 11. *But if he be not able to bring* theſe, *then he ſhall bring a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a ſin-offering.* Ver. 12. *And the prieſt ſhall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar.* Ver. 13. *And the prieſt ſhall make atonement for him, as touching his ſin that he hath ſinned in one of theſe, and it ſhall be forgiven him.* Farther; in caſe of treſpaſſes *through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord*; the offender muſt not only make full amends for the harm that was done in the holy thing according to the eſtimation of the prieſt, but add a fifth part thereto, and bring a ram for a treſpaſs-offering, ver. 16. *And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering, and it ſhall be forgiven him.*

In ſhort, this general rule is laid down, ver. 17. *If a ſoul ſin, and commit any of theſe things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wiſt it not, yet he is guilty, and ſhall bear his iniquity.* 18. *And he ſhall bring a ram without blemiſh out of the flock, with thy eſtimation, for a treſpaſs-offering, unto the prieſt: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wiſt it not, and it ſhall be forgiven him. It is a treſ-*

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paſs-offering, he hath certainly treſpaſſed againſt the Lord. That this regulation refers to things required by ſome poſitive law to be conſidered as devoted to religious purpoſes, appears from the clauſe *with thy eſtimation*, which imports that *damage* had accrued, which ought to be eſtimated and compenſated.

We find a general confirmation of theſe laws about ſins of ignorance in private perſons, in Numb. xv. 27. and the following verſes, *If any ſoul ſin through ignorance, then he ſhall bring a ſhe-goat of the firſt year for a ſin-offering. And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly, when he ſinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it ſhall be forgiven him. You ſhall have one law for him that ſinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born amongſt the children of Iſrael, and for the ſtranger that ſojourneth amongſt them.*

2. Atonements are preſcribed alſo for ſins of ignorance committed by a *ruler* or perſon of ſuperior rank and fortune, Levit. iv. 22, &c. *When a ruler hath ſinned, and done ſomewhat through ignorance againſt any of the commandments of the Lord his God, concerning things which ſhould not be done, and is guilty; or if his ſin, wherein he hath ſinned, come to his knowledge; he ſhall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemiſh.* Ver. 26. *And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, as concerning his ſin, and it ſhall be forgiven him.*

3. For ſins of ignorance committed by a prieſt, the following regulation was preſcribed. Levit. iv. 1, &c. *If a ſoul ſhall ſin through*

ignorance againſt any of the commandments of the Lord. 2. *If the prieſt that is anointed do ſin, according to the ſin of the people, then let him bring for his ſin which he hath ſinned, a young bullock without blemiſh, unto the Lord for a ſin-offering.* Then follow the rites he is to obſerve in ſacrificing it; but it is not ſaid, that he ſhall make atonement for himſelf, which might have been improper: however atonement and forgiveneſs is virtually included in his being required to perform this ſervice, and thereby re-inſtated in his office and miniſtry before the Lord in the tabernacle, for which he was otherwiſe become unfit and incapable.

But not only were individuals, of every rank and order, liable to commit ſins of ignorance, the whole people alſo might very poſſibly fall into like errors, and become, in conſequence, unfit to appear in the preſence of God, and to worſhip him with due decorum and acceptance. Therefore,

4. Atonements were appointed for ſins of ignorance committed by the congregation. Levit. iv. 13. *If the whole congregation of Iſrael ſin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the aſſembly, and they have done ſomewhat againſt any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ſhould not be done, and are guilty.* Ver. 14. *When the ſin which they have ſinned againſt it, is known, then the congregation ſhall offer a young bullock for the ſin, and bring him to the tabernacle of the congregation.* Ver. 15. *And the elders of the congregation ſhall lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord: and the bullock ſhall be killed before the Lord.* And

And afterwards it is directed to be ſacrificed with like ceremonies, as thoſe appointed for a like ſin in a prieſt; it is added, ver. 20. *And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for them, and it ſhall be forgiven them.* The ſame law is thus expreſſed, Numb. xv. 22, &c. *If ye have erred and not obſerved all theſe commandments, which the Lord hath ſpoken unto Moſes.* Ver. 23. *Even all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moſes, from the day that the Lord commanded Moſes, and henceforward among your generations.* Ver. 24. *Then it ſhall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation ſhall offer,* &c. Ver. 25. *And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and it ſhall be forgiven them, for it is ignorance; and they ſhall bring their offering, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their ſin-offering before the Lord, for their ignorance.* Ver. 26. *And it ſhall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and the ſtranger that ſojourneth amongſt them; ſeeing all the people were in ignorance.*

Such were the particular and exact directions for proper atonements to be made for ſins of ignorance, whether committed by the whole congregation, the prieſt, the rulers, or private perſons, but as for known and wilful tranſgreſſions, as well of the ritual and ceremonial, as of the moral precepts this rule was eſtabliſhed, Numb. xv. 30, 31. *The ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly (whether he be born in the land, or a ſtranger) the ſame reproacheth the Lord; and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people. Becauſe*

he hath deſpiſed the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that ſoul ſhall utterly be cut off, his iniquity ſhall be upon him.

6. But notwithſtanding theſe regulations for making atonement for ſins of ignorance, immediately upon their being diſcovered and known, many incidents, unſuitable to the majeſty and holineſs of God, and many violations of his commandments might happen, without ever being noticed, and conſequently without any atonement made for them. To remedy all ſuch caſes, and to remove all defects or diſqualifications ariſing from them, whether from the holy place itſelf, its furniture and miniſters, or from the people of God, and at the ſame time to impreſs upon their minds a more aweful reverence of the greatneſs and purity of God, and a deeper humility for their own offences againſt him, whether known or unknown, atoned or not atoned for, through the whole year paſt, *a day of general and ſolemn atonement* was appointed, the purpoſes of which are thus explained in Levit. xxiii. 27, 28. *On the tenth day of the ſeventh month, there ſhall be a day of atonement, it ſhall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, and ye ſhall do no work in that ſame day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.* In the ſixteenth chapter of the ſame book, very particular directions are given, as to the buſineſs of that day particularly.

1. The high prieſt was to make *atonement* for himſelf and his houſe, ver. 6. *And Aaron ſhall offer his bullock of the ſin-offering, which is for*

for himſelf, and make an atonement for himſelf and his houſe; the ſame is repeated, ver. 11.

2. He was to make an atonement for the people with the ſcape-goat. Ver. 10. *But the goat on which the lot fell to be the ſcape-goat, ſhall be preſented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a ſcape-goat into the wilderneſs.*

3. He was to make atonement alſo for the ſanctuary and the tabernacle, with the blood of the ram of the ſin-offering. Ver. 15. *Then ſhall he kill the goat of the ſin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail.* Ver. 16. *And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy place, becauſe of the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael, and becauſe of their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins; and ſo ſhall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midſt of their uncleanneſs.* Ver. 17. *And their ſhall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation, when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out and have made an atonement for himſelf, and his houſhold, and for all the congregation of Iſrael.*

4. He was alſo to make an atonement for the altar. Ver. 18. *And he ſhall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it: and ſhall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.* Ver. 19. *And he ſhall ſprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger, ſeven times, and cleanſe it, and hallow it from the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael.* As for the altar of incenſe within the tabernacle, though there

are no directions about ſprinkling any of the blood of the bullock or goat upon it, yet it is certain, that this was a part of the high-prieſt's duty on this occaſion, as appears from Exod. xxx. 10. *And Aaron ſhall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the ſin-offering of atonements; once in the year ſhall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is moſt holy unto the Lord.* As for the bodies of the bullock and goat of the ſin-offering, *whoſe blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place*, it is ordered, ver. 27. *One ſhall carry them forth without the camp, and they ſhall burn in the fire their ſkins, and their fleſh, and their dung.*

5. After the fore-mentioned atonements were performed, the high-prieſt was to complete the atonement for the people with the ſcape-goat, mentioned ver. 10. by laying both his hands on the head of the goat, and confeſſing over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them on the head of the goat, and ſending him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs. See ver. 21.

Thus far the atonements of this ſolemn day ſeem to have been entirely of the *reconciliatory* kind, *i. e.* to remove any unfitneſſes, or incapacities for the preſence and ſervice of God, which either the ſanctuary, the tabernacle, the altar, the miniſters, or the people might have contracted from any ceremonial pollutions or tranſgreſſions of the divine precepts, known or unknown, through ignorance. For let it be obſerved

ſerved on the one hand, that theſe general atonements would not excuſe for the omiſſion or neglect of the appointed atonements for particular ſins of ignorance, as ſoon as they came to be known; and on the other, that no atonements at all were appointed for thoſe who ſinned wilfully and preſumptuouſly; they were doomed to be utterly cut off, as we have ſeen above.

Theſe atonements were to be made by the high-prieſt, cloathed in linen garments, which ſeem appropriated to this ſervice. When it was finiſhed he was to put off theſe garments, and waſh himſelf all over, and put on his uſual robes, in the holy place, and come forth, ver. 23, 24. Then followed another ſet of atonements for himſelf and the people, which ſeem to me to have been of, what I called before, the *declaratory* kind; or an acknowledgment and exerciſe of their right and privilege to attend on and perform the ſervice of God in his holy place, ver. 24. *He ſhall offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himſelf, and for the people.*

In the cloſe of the chapter is a ſummary of the duties and purpoſes of the day of atonement in theſe words, ver. 29. *And this ſhall be a ſtatute for ever unto you; that in the ſeventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a ſtranger that ſojourneth among you.* Ver. 30. *For on that day ſhall the prieſt make an atonement for you, to cleanſe you, that ye may be clean from all your ſins before the Lord.* Ver. 31. *It ſhall be a ſabbath of reſt unto you, and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls by a ſtatute for ever.* Ver. 32.

32. *And the prieſt, whom he ſhall anoint, and whom he ſhall conſecrate to miniſter in the prieſt's office in his father's ſtead, ſhall make an atonement for the holy ſanctuary, and he ſhall make the atonement, and ſhall put on the linen cloths, even the holy garments.* 33. *And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy ſanctuary, and he ſhall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar; and he ſhall make an atonement for the prieſts, and for all the people of the congregation.* Ver. 34. *And this ſhall be an everlaſting ſtatute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Iſrael, for all their ſins, once a year.*

7. There were atonements appointed alſo, even for ſome caſes of known and wilful tranſgreſſion of the moral law. Theſe were caſes of diſhoneſt dealing between man and man; but ſuch as admitted compenſation of damages ſuffered thereby. A perſon who had been guilty of ſuch practices was certainly unworthy to appear in the preſence, or engage in the ſervice of the righteous and holy God, ſo long as the injury he had done his neighbour remained unredreſſed, and, conſequently, he had not given the proper proof of his repentance. But if every act of diſhoneſty was finally and irrecoverably to exclude an offender from the privileges of ſerving God in the worſhip of the tabernacle, it was to be apprehended, from the infirmities of human nature, that the number of the excommunicated might be very great, and the conſequences hurtful to the intereſts of religion. Wherefore proviſion is made for ſuch caſes, Levit. vi. 2—7. *If a ſoul ſin and commit a treſ-*

paſs

paſs againſt the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered unto him to keep, or in fellowſhip, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour, or have found that which was loſt, and lieth concerning it, and ſweareth falſely; in any of all theſe that a man doeth, ſinning therein: Then it ſhall be, becauſe he hath ſinned and is guilty, that he ſhall reſtore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the loſt thing which he found, or all that about which he hath ſworn falſely, he ſhall even reſtore it in the principal, and ſhall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his treſpaſs-offering. And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemiſh out of the flock—and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it ſhall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done in treſpaſſing therein.

A ſimilar proviſion is made for the caſe of a man committing lewdneſs with a bond-maid, betrothed to a huſband. Levit. xix. 21, 22. *He ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a treſpaſs-offering. And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering before the Lord, for his ſin which he hath done, and the ſin which he hath done ſhall be forgiven him.*

Numb. v. 7, 8. it is provided, that in caſe the party who had been injured by any fraudulent practice, were not living, nor *have any kinſman to recompenſe the treſpaſs unto, let the treſpaſs be recompenſed unto the Lord, even to the prieſt;*

beſide

beſide the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement ſhall be made for him, viz. the offender.

Thus I have collected together all the appointments of ſacrifical atonements, which I find in the law of Moſes, and arranged them under ſuch claſſes as appeared to me moſt ſuitable to their ſeveral purpoſes. There are, indeed, ſome other paſſages in which theſe atonements are ſpoken of in general expreſſions without ſpecifying their particular kinds or purpoſes. Thus when Moſes reproved Eleazar and Ithamar for not having eaten the ſin-offering in the holy place, he ſaid, Levit. x. 17. *God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord.* Again, Levit. xvii. 11. it is ſaid, *I have given it,* the blood, *to you, upon the altar to make an atonement for your ſouls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the ſoul.* See alſo chap. vii. 7. xxv. 9. 1 Chron. vi. 49. 2 Chron. xxix. 24. Neh. x. 33.

Section IV.

BESIDES the *ſacrifical,* we find that ſeveral other kinds of atonements were appointed by the law, or actually made, in conſequence of ſome eminent act of duty, or zeal, of particular perſons, and that the purpoſe or effect of theſe was to *prevent* threatening, or *avert* preſent and immediate expreſſions of divine diſpleaſure from the perſons who were liable thereto. Particularly,

1. We find a general law, Exod. xxx. 12. and following: *When thou takeſt the ſum of the children of Iſrael after their number, then ſhall they give every man a ranſom for his ſoul unto the Lord when thou numbereſt them: that there be no plague*

among ſt

amongſt them when thou numbereſt them. 15. *The rich ſhall not give more, and the poor ſhall not give leſs than half a ſhekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your ſouls.* 16. *And thou ſhalt take the atonement-money of the children of Iſrael, and ſhalt appoint it for the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Iſrael before the Lord to make an atonement for your ſouls.* Agreeably to this general law we are told, Numb. xxxi. 49, 50. that when the officers returned from the war againſt Midian, they ſaid unto Moſes, *Thy ſervants have taken the ſum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten of jewels of gold, chains and bracelets, rings, ear-rings and tablets, to make an atonement for our ſouls before the Lord.* This oblation might, probably, amount to much more than the required half ſhekel for each man, and was intended as an expreſſion of gratitude, as well as an act of obedience to the law.

2. We find a ſtop put to an infliction of puniſhment already begun, and an atonement made by *offering incenſe*, Numb. xvi. 46, 47. *And Moſes ſaid, Take a cenſer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incenſe, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moſes commanded, and ran into the midſt of the congregation; and behold the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incenſe, and made an atonement for the people.*

3. Another

3. Another plague was ſtopped, and an atonement made by the zeal of Phinehas, in inflicting exemplary puniſhment on Zimri and Coſbi; when God ſaid, Numb. xxv. 11—13. *Phinehas hath turned my wrath away from the children of Iſrael (while he was zealous for my ſake among them) that I conſumed not the children of Iſrael in my jealouſy—he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Iſrael.*

In like manner, when a famine was inflicted on the land for the injuſtice and violence committed by Saul againſt the Gibeonites, David inquired of them, 2 Kings, xxi. 3. *What ſhall I do for you? And wherewith ſhall I make the atonement, that ye may bleſs the inheritance of the Lord?* By which, I apprehend, he did not mean only, wherewith ſhall I make *you* a ſatisfaction, but (as appears from the then preſent ſtate of things, and the conſtant uſe of the word atonement) wherewith ſhall I remove the preſent expreſſion of divine diſpleaſure.

4. We read alſo, Exod. xxxii. 30. that Moſes propoſed to prevent immediate infliction of puniſhment, and to make *atonement* for the ſin of the people in the buſineſs of the golden calf, by *interceding* for them. *Ye have ſinned a great ſin: and now will I go unto the Lord; peradventure I ſhall make an atonement for your ſin.*

I ſhall take the liberty to mention here the caſe of Job's three friends, which, though it comes not under the law, nor belongs to the diſpenſation by Moſes, yet it ſhews that the poſſibility of averting the expreſſions of divine wrath by ſacrifices and prayers, offered up for offenders by a good

a good man, was not unknown among the Arabian tribes, and probably was derived to them from the earlieſt ages. See Job. xlii. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord ſaid unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled againſt thee and againſt thy two friends; for ye have not ſpoken of me the thing that is right, as my ſervant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now ſeven bullocks and ſeven rams, and go to my ſervant Job, and offer up for yourſelves a burnt-offering; and my ſervant Job ſhall pray for you: for him will I accept: leſt I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not ſpoken of me the thing which is right like my ſervant Job. They did according as the Lord commanded them. The Lord alſo accepted Job.* This was making a proper atonement for them, according to the Moſaic ſenſe of the word.

From this collection of caſes for which atonements were appointed by the law of Moſes, or in which extraordinary atonements were actually made, I think it obvious to obſerve as follows:

Firſt, That a great part of the appointed atonements bore no relation at all to moral character, merit or demerit; for many of them were appointed for things altogether incapable thereof, ſuch as the golden and brazen altars, the tabernacle, and the utenſils reſpectively belonging to them; alſo leprous houſes. Others, which were appointed for perſons, related to circumſtances of no moral quality; ſuch as natural infirmities, diſeaſes and accidental events. As to ſins of ignorance, for which atonements were appointed, if they had in them any *evil moral character* or *demerit*, it was of the loweſt kind,

kind, and conſequent upon the imperfections inſeparable from human nature. However, if the offence was ſuch as admitted compenſation, we find a full compenſation, and with it an additional *fine*, muſt be paid down before an atonement could be made. As to acts of fraud, falſehood and injuſtice between man and man, though theſe are certainly criminal, yet it ſeems very expedient that after reſtitution and compenſation for damages made, the offending party ſhould be reſtored to the common privileges of public worſhip in the houſe of God, not only for the reaſon hinted at above, but alſo to promote peace and reconciliation, and reſtore mutual intercourſe in ſociety, to which the injured and offended are commonly too backward. As for the atonement appointed for the man who had debauched a bond-maid betrothed to an huſband, we ought to conſider, how few civil or natural *rights* bond-ſervants could claim, and how lightly they were eſteemed of at that time, and, conſequently, that this would not be reckoned a very heinous tranſgreſſion in an age and country that conſidered concubinage with female ſlaves as deſerving no reproach. Hence this law (which ſeems particularly provided againſt the invaſions of maſters on the purity and honour of the marriage-bed of their dependents) ſeems to be of the ſame kind with that which allowed divorces, of which our Lord ſays, *For the hardneſs of your heart he* (Moſes) *gave you this precept*, Mark x. 5.

Secondly; I would further obſerve, with relation to the extraordinary atonements made by ſome

ſome eminent act of zeal and duty, or prayer, &c. of ſome eminent perſon, whereby ſome impending judgment was averted, or plague actually begun was ſtopped, *that a full pardon does not appear to have been obtained for the offenders hereby*; but only further time, and a continuance of their privileges as the people of God, whereby they might be brought to a due ſenſe of their miſconduct, and to true repentance and amendment, and in conſequence thereof be reſtored to divine favour. It is very obſervable, that when Moſes propoſed to make an atonement for the people in the matter of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 30. and accordingly interceded earneſtly for forgiveneſs, the anſwer which he received concluded with this clauſe, ver. 34. *Nevertheleſs, in the day when I viſit, I will viſit their ſins upon them.* It is added, ver. 35. *And the Lord plagued the people, becauſe they made the calf, which Aaron made.* Hence aroſe that ſaying of ſome of the Jewiſh writers, that in every calamity which hath befallen their nation ever ſince, hath been mingled an ounce of the golden calf.

Thirdly; All the appointed atonements ſeem to me to relate only to the propriety and decorum of the external ſervices of public religious worſhip, in the tabernacle and temple, before the manifeſtation of the divine preſence. This, I think, appears very plain in the atonements at the conſecration of the tabernacle, altars, veſſels and miniſters; alſo in all thoſe atonements appointed for reſtoring perſons to the privileges of public worſhip, who had for ſome time lain under diſqualifications, on account of which (like the child-bearing woman)

it was unlawful for them *to touch any hallowed thing, or come into the ſanctuary*, till the diſqualifying circumſtances were removed. Hence it appears to me moſt reaſonable to conclude, that the ſolemn annual atonements appointed for the day of expiation were not intended to convey a plenary forgiveneſs of all the ſins of the children of Iſrael, whether national ſins, or of individuals; but only a general yearly removal of all incapacities, or diſqualifications for the public worſhip of God, which either the nation, or individuals might have contracted during the courſe of the preceding year, and which had not otherwiſe been atoned for. Whenever therefore we find forgiveneſs connected with the prieſts making atonement, we muſt underſtand it only *(quoad hanc rem)* of a forgiveneſs of the forfeiture of the privileges of attending on public worſhip, which had been incurred.

Fourthly; I obſerve farther, that no atonements are appointed for tranſgreſſions of the moral law, except in the two caſes mentioned before; and though we allow that all the tranſgreſſions and ſins of the children of Iſrael were atoned for on the day of expiation; yet, as was obſerved under the former head, this related only to the privilege of attending the public worſhip of God, as appears from the purpoſe of the other appointments of atonement, and from thoſe which were made at the ſame time for the tabernacle, altar, and veſſels, *to cleanſe, and to hallow them from the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael.*

The

The Jews in after times, indeed (as commonly happens in relation to external obſervances and ceremonial inſtitutions) placed an improper pependence on the appointed ſacrifical atonements, expecting from them benefits they were never deſigned to procure, *i. e.* a plenary forgiveneſs of ſins, and reſtoration to the favour, protection and bleſſing of God; and when they were diſappointed in this hope, they murmured. Many are the admonitions and reproofs againſt this error, which were delivered by the whole ſeries of the prophets, who told them, that obedience was better than ſacrifice, and that repentance and amendment alone could obtain mercy for ſinners, and reſtore them to the favour and love of God. Thus David, lamenting his ſin in the matter of Uriah, ſays, among many other things, to this purpoſe, Pſal. li. 16. *Thou deſireſt not ſacrifice, elſe would I give it: thou delighteſt not in burnt-offerings.* The law had appointed none of theſe things for caſes like his. He adds, *The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Compare the 15th Pſal. Iſa. i. Hoſ vi. 6. Mich. vi. 6, &c.*

Hence

* It ought alſo to be carefully obſerved, that the ſacred writers of the Old Teſtament did not fail frequently to admoniſh the Jews, that (notwithſtanding the occaſional and annual atonements for ſin appointed by Moſes, yet) *moral character* was the great indiſpenſable requiſite to a favourable acceptance of their perſons, when they appeared before God in the temple, and of the ſacrifices themſelves which they offered up there. See the whole 15th pſalm, 24th pſalm, 3, &c. Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Iſa. lxvi. 2, 3. Jer. vi. 20. vii. 21. & ſeq. and many other paſſages.

Hence alſo St. Paul ſays to the Jews of Antioch, in Piſidia, Acts xiii. 39. *By him* (Jeſus) *all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* For that law made very few proviſions for the forgiveneſs of tranſgreſſions of the moral precepts, but on the contrary denounced, Numb. xv. 30. *The ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly (whether he be born in the land, or a ſtranger) the ſame reproacheth the Lord; and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people; becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment; that ſoul ſhall utterly be cut off; his iniquity ſhall be upon him.*

It is very true, that ample declarations are made in the writings of Moſes, concerning the divine placability and readineſs to forgive penitent ſinners; and, beſides the exhortations he gave to the people to repentance, in his lifetime, he records admonitions of the ſame kind for the uſe of ſucceeding ages, when they ſhould ſuffer divine rebukes for their ſins; aſſuring them, that if they returned to God by repentance, he would not fail to return to them by mercy and deliverance. But then, as our Lord ſaid of circumciſion, *That it was not of Moſes,*

Theſe ſeem to confirm the opinion before advanced, that the primary purpoſe of the atonements appointed by the law, was to preſerve the intercourſe between God and his people in public worſhip, by removing ſuch diſqualifications as rendered them unfit to appear before the viſible manifeſtation of his glorious preſence; and, conſequentially, to be ſtated admonitions and motives to great care to reform from ſin, and maintain an obedient and virtuous conduct, as eſſentially neceſſary to ſecure the favour of God.

but

but of the fathers, John vii. 22. So *this* was not a diſtinguiſhing doctrine of the law of Moſes, but a principle of religion well known to the more early patriarchs. On this principle Noah preached repentance to the old world. Alſo Job and his friends acknowledge and reaſon largely upon it.

To conclude for the preſent. The atonements appointed by the law of Moſes did effectually anſwer the *purpoſe* of their inſtitution, which was *to maintain a regular and becoming intercourſe between God and his people, in the ordinances of public religious worſhip*; but were of no avail, *by themſelves*, to take away the guilt of ſin, and ſecure the favour of God to ſinners: for *this* they were not appointed; but it muſt be obtained only by repentance and amendment of the ſinner, who believed in the placability and mercy of God.

PART II.

THE manner of religious worſhip eſtabliſhed by Chriſt is very different from that which was inſtituted by Moſes. By the goſpel, no particular place, or edifice, is appropriated, or conſecrated for the performance of the ſolemnities of the public worſhip of God, to which chriſtians are required to repair, and offer ſacrifices and oblations there only. But agreeably to the prediction of the prophet Mal. i. 11. *From the riſing of the ſun, even to the going-down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in*

every place incenſe ſhall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering. And to that alſo of our Lord, in his diſcourſe with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21, 23. *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father.— But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.* Chriſtians are indulged in a full liberty of offering unto God thoſe ſincere and ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, which are required from them by the goſpel. Agreeably hereto, Paul willeth *that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,* 2 Tim. ii. 8.

No cloud of glory, or other viſible ſymbol of the preſence and majeſty of God, is exhibited any where, for the diſciples of his ſon Jeſus to worſhip before it; but they are taught, John iv. 24. that *God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth:* and are aſſured by their maſter, Matt. xviii. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* In ſhort; God doth not now exerciſe the office of a *civil and political* as well *religious* ruler over chriſtians, as he did over the people of the Jews; he hath eſtabliſhed no where a worldly court, with its apparatus of officers, and ceremonials to be ſtrictly obſerved.

Under ſuch a ſpiritual and univerſal conſtitution of religion, there ſeems to be no propriety in, or room for ordinances relative to ceremonial impurities,

impurities, or corporeal defilements, ſuch as thoſe which rendered the Jews unfit to appear before the ſymbol of the divine preſence, or in the courts of the majeſty of God; nor for either ſtated or occaſional atonements to be made for like purpoſes as thoſe by which the Jews were reſtored to, or confirmed in the privilege and right of attending on the public worſhip under the law. Agreeably to the ſpiritual genius and purpoſes of the goſpel, we are taught, that ſpiritual impurities only, *i. e.* evil diſpoſitions and wicked practices, render us defiled and unacceptable in the ſight of God; that, as to corporeal things, *there is nothing unclean of itſelf*, Rom. xiv. 14. that *There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man.—For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs. All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.* Mark vii. 15. 21, 22, 23. And with regard even to theſe ſpiritual defilements, chriſtians are not cut off by them from their relation to God, or privilege of worſhipping him; but upon a ſpiritual purification, *i. e.* upon repentance and amendment, and the cultivation of better diſpoſitions, particularly of meekneſs, mercifulneſs and forgiveneſs of thoſe who have injured us, we are encouraged and taught to hope for the forgiveneſs of our ſins. Yea, our Lord teacheth us to pray thus to our Father who is in heaven; *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*; and aſſureth us, *If ye forgive*

men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes. Matt. vi. 12. 14, 15. On another occaſion our Lord extended his declaration concerning forgiveneſs of ſins with an exception againſt *one* only, Matt. xii. 31. *All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men; but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men.*

Jeſus having, during his miniſtry, delivered theſe and ſuch like ſpiritual and gracious principles of the everlaſting goſpel, did, in obedience to the commandment of God, and for the confirmation of his divine miſſion, voluntarily ſubmit himſelf to death; but God raiſed him from the dead, and thereby teſtified that he had ſent him, and authenticated the truth of all that he had taught in his name. And farther, becauſe *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; therefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow;—and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Phil. ii. 8—11. *Him hath God exalted to his right hand, to be a prince and a ſaviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.* Acts v. 31. *He raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places: far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come. And hath put all things*

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under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all. Eph. i. 20. to the end.

By this dominion and power conferred on the exalted Jeſus in reward of his obedience unto death, he was authorized and enabled to cauſe the goſpel, which he had himſelf preached, to be propagated throughout the world, and to call all nations, the Jews firſt, and afterwards the Gentiles, to the faith in him, and to unite them into one church and kingdom, unto God, under his own adminiſtration, protection and obedience, until the end of time, when he will raiſe the dead, judge the world, and perfect the ſalvation of them that have obeyed him. Accordingly, the ſame day that Jeſus roſe from the dead, he ſhewed to his diſciples, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. that, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.* Before his aſcenſion he commanded them, Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel unto every creature*; or as Matthew writes, xviii. 18. to the end, *Jeſus came, and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and diſciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The purport of the particular commiſſion which he gave to Paul, when

when he ſent him to the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 18. was, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me.*

No wonder, then, that the writers of the New Teſtament ſhould affect to dwell upon, and triumph in the death of Chriſt, as producing ſo glorious a reward to himſelf, and ſuch ineſtimable advantages to his followers through the promulgation of the goſpel in conſequence thereof. Amongſt many others we may notice the follwing paſſages, Rom. vi. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is coucified unto me, and I unto the world.* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *We preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God and the wiſdom of God.* Heb. xii. 2. *Looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith, who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Nor is it ſtrange, that theſe writers, being themſelves Jews, educated in a veneration for, and having long lived in the obſervance of the inſtitutions of Moſes, and addreſſing ſeveral of their writings to Jews, ſhould, when writing on the death of Chriſt and its glorious conſequences, make frequent alluſions to thoſe inſtitutions and the purpoſes they were deſigned to ſerve; and even borrow the terms and modes of ſpeech

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which they found uſed by Moſes and the prophets concerning thoſe matters, and eſpecially (as they wrote in the Greek language) that they ſhould make uſe of the terms they found in the Greek tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, which was at that time in common uſe among a conſiderable part of the Jews.

As for the term *atonement*, we find it once only in our verſion of the New Teſtament, Rom. v. 11. *And not only ſo, but we alſo joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.* The word which is thus rendered is καταλλαγην, which is elſewhere uniformly tranſlated *reconciling* or *reconciliation*, chap. xi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. and is no where uſed by the ſeventy in any paſſage relating to the legal atonements. And in this paſſage, I apprehend, the apoſtle means our admiſſion to the privileges of the church and people of God, through the promulgation of the goſpel conſequent upon the death of Chriſt, or, as he expreſſeth it himſelf in the ſecond ver. *By whom we have acceſs* (προσαγωγην,) *by faith* INTO THIS GRACE, *wherein we ſtand.* But though we are already *reconciled*, *juſtified*, or brought into a more advantageous ſtate of relation to God and favour with him, by means of the death of Chriſt, the promulgation of the goſpel and our faith in him, yet the apoſtle repreſents our obtaining a full pardon and ſalvation from wrath, as an effect to be yet completed. Ver. 9, 10. *Much more then, being* NOW *juſtified by his blood, we* SHALL BE *ſaved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his ſon; much more*

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BEING *reconciled, we* SHALL BE *ſaved by his life.* Then follows the text firſt quoted.

But though we do not oftener find the word *atonement* in our Engliſh verſion of the New Teſtament, yet we find, in the original, that the holy writers make uſe of the ſame, or of kindred words derived from the ſame root, as that which the ſeventy almoſt always uſe in their verſion of the paſſages where the legal atonements are ſpoken of (ἐξιλασκομαι) and apply them to Chriſt with a reference to his blood, or death.

Heb. ii. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people.* The original word is ἱλασκεσθαι, which might have been rendered *to make atonement.* The apoſtle repeats and enlarges further on the ſame thought in the three laſt verſes of the fourth, and the three firſt of the fifth chapter. Let us conſider the whole together. He ſeems plainly to intend a parallel between Chriſt and the Jewiſh high prieſt, and the purpoſe of their reſpective miniſtries, the former in heaven, the latter in the tabernacle and temple on earth.

The Jewiſh high prieſt was *taken from among men,* and was appointed to be the miniſter by whom the people, when duly qualified according to the law, held communion with and worſhipped God, by whom they preſented their offerings to him with acceptance, and derived favour and bleſſings from him. But it was expedient that the perſon who held ſuch an office ſhould himſelf

himſelf ſhare with his brethren in the infirmities of humanity, that he might be more ready to *have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*, and to afford them all the direction and aſſiſtance in his power. This circumſtance would naturally encourage the people to be more frequent and cheerful in their attendances on the appointed ſervices. In like manner, it was expedient *that Jeſus, the ſon of God*, our great high prieſt, *who is paſſed into the heavens, ſhould be made like unto his brethren in all things, that he might be merciful and faithful in things pertaining to God* (*i. e.* in matters relating to the worſhip of God; compare chap. v. 1. *For we have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.* Now, what exhortation doth the apoſtle infer from this ſubject? See chap. iv. 14. *Let us hold faſt our profeſſion.* Ver. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* From this repreſentation we gather, that the purpoſe of Chriſt's atonement and high prieſthood in heaven is (like the atonements and prieſthood under the law) to encourage and promote our ſteadfaſtneſs in the profeſſion of the goſpel, and diligence and comfort in religious worſhip, according to the inſtitutions of the goſpel.

The ſame ſentiment is ſtill further unfolded, and the proper conſequence inculcated, chap. x. 19—25. *Having, therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new*

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and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, though the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh; and having an high prieſt over the houſe of God: Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water. Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promiſed: And let us conſider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together as the manner of ſome is.

In the 13th chap. ver. 11. the apoſtle having obſerved, that *The bodies of thoſe beaſts, whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary by the high prieſt for ſin, are burnt without the camp:* (meaning, no doubt, the bullock and goat of the ſin-offering, with whoſe blood the high prieſt made the ſolemn atonements in the tabernacle on the day of expiation. See Levit. xvi.) *Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people* (or conſecrate them to God) *with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate.* He adds, *Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come. By him, therefore, let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* Here alſo we find the apoſtle deducing an exhortation to ſteadfaſtneſs in adhering to the profeſſion of our faith in Chriſt, and diligence in performing religious worſhip in his name, from the repeſentation of him, as having made atonement for us with his own blood. Query; May we not collect from this paſſage, a hint of

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a very pleaſing and ſtriking point of view in which to conſider the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper, as moſt happily calculated to anſwer the purpoſes ſuggeſted in this text? Does it not ſeem likely that the apoſtle might have it in contemplation when he wrote it?

This manner of repreſenting the unreſtrained liberty, which is granted to us by the goſpel, to aſſemble together, at any time, in any place, and under any circumſtances, to offer unto God the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, which alone are required from us, in the name of our great high prieſt, who appeareth always in the preſence of God for us, was well calculated to make a deep impreſſion on the minds and hearts of the Jews, and to recommend ſo gracious a conſtitution to their thankful acceptance. For they had felt ſeverely the inconveniences of being confined to one place of ſolemn religious worſhip, the trouble and expence of being obliged to aſſemble there from all parts of the country, and even of the earth; the coſtlineſs of the ſacrifices, the many circumſtances which excluded them from the houſe of God, and the charge of the atonements required to reſtore them to the privilege of attending there.

With like alluſion to the ſacrifical atonements appointed to cleanſe the people from thoſe defilements which rendered them unfit to appear before God; to the miniſtrations of the high prieſt in the holy place for that purpoſe, and to the recovery and confirmation to them of the privilege of partaking in the public ſervices of the tabernacle, St. John alſo expreſſeth the full and uninterrupted

uninterrupted liberty of holding communion, or fellowſhip, with the Father, the Son, and the whole church of Chriſt, and the removal of all incapacities, for that purpoſe, ariſing from any ſins already committed, which is granted to all penitent ſinners, who believe in Jeſus, by the goſpel which was confirmed by the death of Chriſt, and is now publiſhed to the world in conſequence of his exaltation to glory and power in heaven. See epiſt. 1. chap. i. ver. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his ſon Jeſus Chriſt.* Ver. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon cleanſeth us from all ſin.* Ver. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* Chap. ii. 1, 2. *If any man ſin, we have an advocate* (comforter, παρακλητον) *with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous: and he is the propitiation (atonement, ιλασμος) for our ſins; but not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world.* He repeats it in his exhortation to mutual love among chriſtians. Chap. iv. 10. *Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his ſon to be the propitiation for our ſins; i.e.* by means of his death to publiſh to us all the glad tidings of repentance and remiſſion of ſins, and receive us all into the ſame relation to, and communion with himſelf and his whole church. He therefore very properly adds, ver. 11. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.*

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St. Paul (Rom. iii. 25.) ſpeaks of Chriſt under the ſtrong and expreſſive figure of a *mercy-ſeat* (ιλαστηριον; the ſeventy always uſe that word in this ſenſe in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, and our tranſlators have ſo rendered it in the only other paſſage of the New Teſtament where we find it uſed, Heb. ix. 5.) to ſhew, that as in the tabernacle the glorious manifeſtation of the divine preſence reſided upon the mercy-ſeat, and from thence God delivered the oracles of his will, and diſpenſed the bleſſings of his favour to his people, ſo, under the new diſpenſation, the preſence, authority and power of God reſideth in Chriſt Jeſus: by him God delivereth the everlaſting oracles of his truth and will to mankind, diſpenſeth the bleſſings of his mercy and favour to his people, and will continue to protect and rule over his church to the end of the world. To this high character and office he was exalted in reward of his obedience unto death; and by the goſpel which he hath promulgated unto all men in the execution of that office, we are taught the righteouſneſs of God, *i. e.* the manner in which God will freely forgive and accept of penitent ſinners, even by ſincere faith in Jeſus, particularly, in his death, and the conſequences of his death; or, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, ver. 21. *But* NOW *the righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted without the law, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets.* 22. *Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by means of faith of Chriſt Jeſus, unto all and upon all them that believe.* 24. *Being juſtified freely by his grace, by means of the redemption* (or deliverance) *which is in Jeſus Chriſt.* 25. *Whom God hath*

ſet forth as *a mercy-ſeat (by means of faith in his blood) to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* 26. *To declare* AT THIS TIME *his righteouſneſs: that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.*

Thus I have taken notice of, and endeavoured to explain all the paſſages of the New Teſtament where I find the words ιλασκομαι, ιλασμος and ιλαστηριον made uſe of and applied to Chriſt; and I apprehend, that they all relate only to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation of thoſe advantages we at preſent enjoy by the goſpel, and particularly of a free and uninterrupted liberty of worſhipping God according to the inſtitutions of Chriſt, granted unto us, in conſequence of his death: juſt as the legal atonements ſerved (though far more imperfectly) ſimilar purpoſes under that diſpenſation.

Let us now turn to ſome other paſſages of the New Teſtament, which, without referring to the legal atonements, teach us, that it was the deſign of Chriſt's death, that he ſhould be inveſted with authority and power to call all men to the acknowledgement and obedience of the true God, and to the faith in him; to confer on all who believe in him forgiveneſs of ſins, and the privileges of the people of God, with full and unreſtrained liberty of acceſs to God, in the appointed duties of religion offered up in his name, and to unite them all into one body, or church, to be edified in faith and holineſs to a meetneſs for eternal life. Thus our Lord himſelf ſays, John x. 15, 16, 17. *I lay down my life for*

for the ſheep; and other ſheep I have which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

St. Paul, writing to the Epheſians, among many other things to the ſame purpoſe, ſays, chap. i. 9, 10. *Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf: That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him.* Chap. ii. 13, &c. *But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye, who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt. For he is our peace, who hath made both one;—that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace unto you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have an acceſs by one ſpirit unto the Father,* &c. to the end. And to the Coloſſians he writes, chap. i. 13, 14. *Giving thanks unto the Father—who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear ſon. In whom we have redemption through* (or by means of) *his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins.*—Ver. 19, 20, 21, 22. *For it pleaſed the Father—(having made peace through the blood of his croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf.—And you, that were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his fleſh; through* (or by means of) *death, to preſent you*

holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his ſight. I might refer alſo to 2 Cor. v. 17. to the end. Eph. i. 5, 6, 7. and many other ſimilar texts. In all theſe paſſages, the death of Chriſt is repreſented as the *means* by which the reconciliation, redemption, or deliverance of mankind is effected, and the forgiveneſs of ſins *already* conferred on believers, through the free grace of God, in order to their improvement in holineſs, by the influences of the example, doctrine and inſtitutions of Chriſt, which are provided for the benefit of the whole community of his church. But I do not recollect any text, where the death of Chriſt is repreſented, as the *cauſe*, *reaſon*, or *motive* why God hath conferred theſe bleſſings on men.

What aſpect the obſervations propoſed in this diſſertation, may bear upon certain particular doctrines, or ſyſtems of doctrines, I pretend not to determine, nor am I much concerned. I mean only to ſubmit them to the careful conſideration and judgment of the ſerious and candid reader, praying with the apoſtle, Eph. i. 9, &c. *That we all might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding; That we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God,* &c.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am always pleaſed with a writer, whatever be his ſentiments, who diſcovers ſo diſpaſſionate a temper as your correſpondent Bereanus. I muſt declare at the ſame time, however, that there appears to me to be little weight in any of the arguments he has offered, in ſupport of the hypotheſis for which he contends. I might, indeed, think differently, were there no other texts of ſcripture relating to the perſon of Chriſt, but thoſe he has produced. But he well knows that there are many other texts, which ſeem to ſome chriſtians, to militate as ſtrongly againſt the pre-exiſtence, as thoſe which he has quoted, ſeem to him to favour that doctrine. I might preſent your readers with a long liſt of ſuch texts, and then infer after his example, becauſe Jeſus is repeatedly called, *a man, a man, in all things made like unto us, ſin only excepted,* &c. it is plain, that all my opponents are under the influence of the moſt inveterate prejudices, and that no words nor language, however preciſely determining the humanity of Chriſt, would be ſufficient to convince them.* But I chooſe to take a different method. I will look to thoſe texts, upon which Bereanus himſelf reſts, as the everlaſting pillars of his faith.

I will only previouſly obſerve, that the firſt notions we receive are but too apt to influence

* See Theological Repoſitory, Vol. III. p. 148.

us as long as we live. Even the ſounds of words, to which we have been early habituated to aſcribe ſome peculiarity, venerable and awful meaning, almoſt always affect us in a different manner from other words of exactly the ſame ſignification. *The grace of God*, for inſtance, even after we know that it means no more than *the favour of God*, will continue to make a different kind of impreſſion on us, until we recollect ourſelves, from what *the favour of God* does. To ſome prepoſſeſſion of this kind I attribute it, that Bereanus ſhould derive the pre-exiſtent ſcheme from John vi. 36, 62. after the excellent, and, I think, unanſwerable obſervations of your correſpondent Patrobas, upon theſe paſſages. He has been taught to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt did not begin to exiſt when he was born or produced. There are ſome texts which, taken independently, and by a forced conſtruction, may be made to expreſs this doctrine. Upon theſe he has fixed; and after, it would ſeem to me, torturing them a little; he concludes all thoſe to be in the dark, who do not inſtantly adopt his ſcheme. I hope I do not miſrepreſent him. I would only refer any one to thoſe few texts which he has quoted, and the only texts which he could quote, in favour of his hypotheſis, and then aſk, if he has not put a very forced conſtruction upon them. To begin with Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. which he thus renders: *Who being in the form of God, did not look upon likeneſs to God, as a thing to be coveted; but emptied himſelf, and took the form of a ſervant, when made in the likeneſs of men, and being found in condition as a man,*

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he humbled himſelf, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. His paraphraſe is 'Who being in a godlike condition *in the heavenly world was not deſirous to continue in ſuch a godlike ſtate*; but diveſted himſelf of his glory, *aſſumed humanity*, in a very mean and low condition, and *being thus brought into the ſtate of a man*, he *humbled himſelf yet more*, by ſubmitting even to death, the painful and ignominious death of crucifixion.' Now, when we compare the paraphraſe with the text, we ſee that theſe paſſages, 'in the heavenly world, was not deſirous to continue in ſuch a godlike ſtate, aſſumed humanity, and being thus brought into the ſtate of a man, humbled himſelf yet more,' are additions to the text. Yet, this illuſtration, Bereanus ſays, ſeems quite natural, and gives to each expreſſion its plain, literal meaning. What ſeems to have led him into this train of thinking, is the ſuppoſition that the apoſtle here had a gradation in his eye. But we find no neceſſity that I can diſcover for making this ſuppoſition. Why might not Chriſt be in the form of God, and in the form of a ſlave at the ſame time? There is no mention of different times in the text, but rather, it would appear, of the ſame time. *Who being*, or who at the ſame time that he was *in the form of God, took the form of a ſlave*, ſeems to be the natural meaning of the apoſtle, and conveys a ſentiment moſt honourable to Jeſus. The *order*, therefore, of which our author ſpeaks, and which he apprehends to be *inverted* by this ſcheme is, in my opinion, merely imaginary.

But, another thing which ſeems to have miſled Bereanus, is the ſuppoſition that Jeſus emptied himſelf of the form of God. Taking the words as he has rendered them, the connection obligeth us to conclude, that it was the likeneſs of God, of which Jeſus diveſted himſelf. 'Who 'being in the form, *the repreſentative or ambaſ-'ſador* of God, did not look upon likeneſs to 'God as a thing to be coveted, but emptied 'himſelf *of this.*'

What has been here ſaid, may ſerve to remove the objections, that are ſtarted againſt what is called the Socinian hypotheſis, from 2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, though he was rich, yet for your ſakes became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.* Here the apoſtle does not appear to me, to refer at all to our Lord's exiſtence, in a ſtate of glory and happineſs in the celeſtial realms, before his appearance in this world, but ſolely to his condition in this world, and to mean that he was rich and poor at the ſame time. He was certainly rich during his earthly pilgrimage, in the divine communications, being the well-beloved of the Father, having received all power from him, and enjoying the moſt intimate and uninterrupted communion with him. Yet, while he was thus highly honoured and beloved of God, he cheerfully ſubmitted to all human adverſity, and was the humbleſt of the ſons of men. In this ſenſe of the words, there is a great propriety and force in the apoſtle's addreſs, nor is there, as far as I can ſee, the leaſt force

put

put upon them.* Neither can I perceive upon what foundation Bereanus affirms that "the contrary interpretation is moſt honourable to Jeſus, and that, if he had no exiſtence before his incarnation, there was no merit in his being poor, any more than in the poverty of any other man." I rather take this to be a round aſſertion. For, how does this writer know, but the great merit aſcribed to Jeſus on account of his humility, may be well grounded, though he may not be able to diſcover it fully, or may be miſtaken as to the pre-exiſtence. Muſt the matter depend upon his bare opinion? He will think, I hope, upon cool reflection, that he has here expreſſed himſelf in too poſitive a manner. Beſides, it ſhould be conſidered, that the poverty of Chriſt did not relate to his want of riches merely, but to his whole condition, to the reviling, hatred and abuſe he met with, and to his god-like behaviour under theſe circumſtances; and had he ever an equal, in this reſpect, if we conſider his conduct throughout, particularly in the laſt ſcene of all? Bereanus, indeed, intimates that he had not only equals, but, if we are to carry our ideas of his humility no farther, even ſuperiors. "If," ſays he, "our Redeemer did not fill an exalted ſtation in the heavenly world, before his conception and birth, the great en-

* Let it be conſidered what kind of riches the apoſtle ſpeaks of when he ſays, that ye might be rich: certainly that of holineſs and divine communications which they poſſeſſed already; for he ſays, ver. 7. *As ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us.* He muſt mean then that Chriſt was rich in a ſimilar kind. VIGILIUS.

comiums

comiums given to his humility and grace, in this and the paſſage before explained, may be applied in the ſame ſenſe to ſeveral of the apoſtles." He ſays again, "In what inſtances did our Lord diſcover his humility and grace, in which they did not diſcover theirs." And again, "Did he give up any temporal advantages? He never poſſeſſed any. Whereas ſome of them gave up their all, and forfeited the favour of the great and the learned, which they had enjoyed." In anſwer to all this, I will only propoſe a few queries. Did the apoſtles diſcover their humility in the ſame degree that he did? Which of them was uniformly humble like him? Which of them ſo rich as he? Farther; How did they acquire their humility? Was not he their example and guide? Did they not learn of him? Was not he the original? Were not they copyiſts? Does not he ſay, *Without me ye can do nothing? &c. Be of good cheer,* I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD! And, had not they the evidence of his reſurrection to arm them with fortitude?

If the foregoing obſervations ſhall be found to have any weight in them, but few remarks will be neceſſary upon the remaining texts which this writer has quoted. I cannot help expreſſing my ſurprize that John iii. 16. ſhould be of the number, *God ſo loved the world, &c.* "A conſiderable ſtreſs," ſays B. "appears to be laid upon the terms *only-begotten Son*; and if our Lord enjoyed glory and happineſs in the preſence of God in heaven, and was an object of his affection and delight, it was amazing benevolence

lence indeed in the Supreme Being to ſend him into this world," &c. But, ſurely the benevolence of God was equally amazing, ſuppoſing that his well-beloved ſon had no exiſtence before his birth.

The next text, which our author produces in favour of his hypotheſis, is Heb. i. 2. *By whom alſo he*, God, *made the worlds*. "The word tranſlated *worlds*," he ſays, "ſhould have been rendered *ages*, and denotes the religious diſpenſations, which God hath granted to mankind, the laſt and moſt excellent of which chriſtians enjoy." He likewiſe acknowledges, that the word rendered *made*, may be rendered *conſtituted*, or that the whole paſſage ſhould run, *by whom God conſtituted the ages*. Yet, hence he concludes, "Jeſus muſt, therefore, have exiſted long before his incarnation." How precipitate! If, indeed, the ages here manifeſtly ſignified all the ages of time, B's inference muſt have been juſt; for Jeſus muſt certainly have exiſted during thoſe ages, over which he had dominion. But there ſeems no more reaſon for this ſuppoſition, than for ſuppoſing that the *ages* we are ſpeaking of ſignify *eternity*, and that, becauſe the prophet Iſaiah calls Chriſt *the Father of the ages*; it is therefore to be inferred from the text under conſideration, that God made Chriſt the Father of eternity, or that God made Chriſt to be himſelf. It is beyond all doubt, however, that Chriſt had no dominion over the ages preceding his birth. For, he did not enter into his kingdom until after his reſurrection. Theſe ages, therefore, which God conſtituted by his Son,

Son, or under his Son, or which *he put in ſubjection to him*, according to chap. ii. 5.* are no other than the ages that commenced with his being exalted by the right hand of God, or thoſe ages which ſucceeded the Jewiſh diſpenſation.

To convince B. that nothing more is intended in John viii. 58. than that Chriſt was greater than Abraham, it will be ſufficient, I hope, to refer him again to the whole diſcourſe, particularly the thirty-third, thirty-fifth, thirty-ſixth, fifty-firſt, fifty-ſecond and fifty-third ver. It was this truth which offended the Jews at firſt, and it was the frequent repetition of this truth, which ſo violently incenſed them againſt our Lord at laſt.

He firſt, we ſee, made himſelf greater than Abraham, by offering them freedom, who were the children of Abraham. Secondly; He claims the ſame pre-eminence, by promiſing that his followers ſhould never ſee death, which was a privilege that the Jews could not pretend to have received from Abraham. He, in the next place, proves this ſuperiority, in theſe words, *Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day, and he ſaw it, and was glad.* To this the Jews, as they thought, made a witty reply, *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham?* He had not ſaid, we find, that he ſaw Abraham,

* In this text the apoſtle ſeems intentionally to explain what he means by the word *world* or *age*, in this epiſtle: the age or diſpenſation which the prophets had foretold as to come; this is the age or world *of which we ſpeak*. Again he ſpeaks, chap. vi. 5. *of the powers of the world to come, i. e.* the extraordinary powers which God hath granted to authenticate the chriſtian diſpenſation. VIGILIUS.

but

but that Abraham ſaw his day. And what day could poſſibly be meant here, according to the common uſe of language, but ſome future day, or the time when he would make his appearance in our world? It was very uſual with the prophets to expreſs themſelves after this manner, *I ſaw, &c.* that is, I fore-knew that ſuch perſonages ſhould appear, or that ſuch events ſhould come to paſs, in ſome future period, or at ſuch a particular future period. But, neither does our Lord ſay, in his anſwer to this reply, that he ſaw Abraham, but *before Abraham was, I am*; which phraſe does not ſo much imply, I apprehend, that he exiſted in the divine decree before Abraham, as that he was ſpoken of, and promiſed before Abraham. Abraham was unknown to the world, until his birth. But Chriſt was promiſed from the beginning, as the ſeed of the woman, who ſhould be able to accompliſh more than any other man, who muſt, therefore, be greater than Abraham.

The only remaining text which B. has introduced in ſupport of his hypotheſis, is John xvii. 5. *O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The language uſed Matt. xxv. 34. he ſay, is not parallel. Be it ſo. *The Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world,* is ſurely parallel language.

I need go no farther in remarking upon the foregoing texts, as the doctrine in queſtion does not ſo much depend upon the phraſeology of ſome particular paſſages of ſcripture, as upon the general character that is given us of Chriſt

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by all the ſacred writers. All the prophets ſpeak of him as a *man*, a man of the *ſame nature* with other men, their *brother* and their *fellow*. Accordingly, the evangeliſts and apoſtles teach us, that he was born of a woman like all other men, that he grew in ſtature and in wiſdom like them, and that he was ſubject to thirſt, and hunger, and fatigue, and pain, and ſorrow, and death, as much as any other human being. He himſelf was not aſhamed to call us brethren. Under the character of *mediator*, and the *anointed ſaviour*, he has no other appellation but that of *man*. *There is one mediator between God and man, the* man *Chriſt Jeſus*. And accordingly, he is declared, to have been a partaker of fleſh and blood, to have had a ſoul, and to have been tempted in all points like as we are, ſin only excepted, and to be made in all things like unto his brethren. Now, does not this account of Chriſt oblige us to explain the moſt lofty expreſſions concerning him, in perfect conſiſtency with his having had no exiſtence before his birth? There is nothing equivocal in the term *man*, man that was *born*, that was an *infant*, that was ſubject to all human infirmities, not death excepted. Could as plain and poſitive language be produced from ſcripture, on the other ſide of the queſtion, B. might triumph with ſome reaſon. Was it ſaid, that Jeſus was not a man, that he exiſted long before his incarnation, that he was happy ages before his appearance in this world, and that during the days of his fleſh, he was only degraded into the mean condition of a man, having before he was born filled a godlike ſtation

in

in the heavenly world; then might we be charged with inveterate prejudices. But, until ſuch paſſages of ſcripture can be produced as thus poſitively declare the pre-exiſtence, let not the advocates for this doctrine, eſpecially while there are ſuch clouds of witneſſes againſt it, lay claim to infallibility, and dogmatically aſſert, that no other chriſtians are open to conviction.

RATIONALIS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

I Beg leave, through the channel of your very uſeful Repoſitory, to offer my mite towards elucidating a paſſage of ſcripture, which has involved ſome men of genius and learning, in the wildeſt reveries. I have two reaſons for ſoliciting this favour. If I am wrong, I would thankfully receive information; and, If I am right, I would freely communicate the reſult of my inquiries to others.

The paſſage is, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. *By which alſo, Chriſt went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon, which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight ſouls, were ſaved by water.* This apoſtle, in the preceding verſe, led the attention of his converts to the glorious example of Chriſt, who *alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God, being put to death*

death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: It is added, *by which also he went, and preached unto the spirits in prison. By which,* that is, by his death and resurrection, or, as the apostle says, by his being put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the spirit, he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

We shall now inquire, who were the spirits in prison; and to this purpose, I think, we need only read a prediction of Isaiah, concerning the important consequences to all nations, of the great Messiah's coming into the world; *I the Lord,* says the prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, *have called thee* (Christ) *in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison house.* The spirits in prison, then, were all the Gentiles, and all the Jews likewise, who sit in darkness, or who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage, that is, in short, all the children of men.* The only difficulty attending this interpretation, is, that it is afterwards said of these prisoners, that *they were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.* But this seems to be no more

* That Peter borrowed this mode of expression from Isaiah, and that the prophet used it in relation to those to whom the gospel should be preached; see also chap. lxi. 1. compared with Luke iv. 18, &c. VIGILIUS.

than

than a figurative expreſſion, ſignifying not the ſame individuals, but priſoners of the ſame kind with that rebellious people, who lived before the flood, and who were ſhut up in the gloomy manſions of ſin and death, with all the terrible judgments of God hanging over their heads. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Our Lord went and preached to thoſe ſpirits, that is, to thoſe men who were priſoners, in the ſame ſenſe, that all thoſe children of diſobedience formerly were, when the long-ſuffering of God waited, without any effect, for their repentance and ſalvation, in the days of Noah." Before the flood, very nearly the whole human race had corrupted their ways, and had ſo deeply immerſed themſelves in all iniquities, that they could have no reaſonable hope of the mercies of God beyond the grave. When the flood came, they could have no other proſpect, but the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. The time was, when the day of ſalvation ſhone upon them, when they might have repented, and obtained the forgiveneſs of God. But, this time was now no more. They, having abuſed all the meſſages of Divine Grace, and laughed to ſcorn that benevolent diſpenſation which was calculated to ſave them, found at laſt, to their eternal confuſion, that they had been ſporting with their own lives, that there was a God, who judgeth in the earth, and that their deſtruction was inevitable. The floods, yea, the floods encompaſſed them, and they could find no place of refuge where they might reſt their feet, or look for ſafety or deliverance, but de-

ſpairing, groaning, dying, ſunk into the dreary priſon of the grave.

In a priſon of the ſame kind were all the children of men, when the ſun of righteouſneſs diffuſed the bright beams of his heavenly light upon them. The Gentiles had ſo aſtoniſhingly darkened the candle of the Lord within them, by their almoſt incredible ſuperſtitions, and enormous iniquities, that only clouds and ſhadows could ſurround them. Plato, indeed, had written ſo excellently upon the immortality of the ſoul, as to pleaſe, and in ſome meaſure to ſatisfy thoſe, who thought deeply upon the ſubject. But few, very few, of the bulk of mankind, had leiſure to examine, or ſtrength of mind enough to perceive the force of his arguments. And of theſe few, ſome of the greateſt could be no longer convinced than when they were reading his book. This was the caſe with Cato, who, while he was reading, both admired the wiſdom of Plato, and believed that the diſſolution of the body did not at all infer the death of the ſoul. But, no ſooner did he lay down Plato's book, than all his doubts and fears returned. Nay, Socrates himſelf, the maſter and guide of Plato, and the wonder and luminary of the heathen world, though he fell a ſacrifice to his noble oppoſition to the reigning ſuperſtitions and idolatries of his country, yet, when the laſt ſcene came to open upon him, could not help wavering and giving way to many deſponding thoughts, and fearful apprehenſions. But, except Socrates and a few others, the whole heathen world was buried in abſolute darkneſs.

Their

Their proſpects into futurity were founded upon mere conjectures, which, like a dream of the night, might make ſome tranſient impreſſions, but muſt ſhortly after leave them in a ſtate of diſconſolate ſuſpenſe, or agonizing deſpair. Or, if they could have ſeen farther than they did, they were ſo reprobate in all their ways, and lived ſo univerſally as if there was no God in the world, that they muſt have rather dreaded the poſſibility of a future ſtate, in which they ſhould be called to an account, than wiſhed to know that ſuch a ſtate was really intended for them. And, as to the Jews, it is well known that one ſect among them abſolutely denied a future ſtate, and that all the other ſects were ſo ſenſual, hypocritical, and ſo abominably diſobedient to the laws of God, that if they at all looked beyond the grave, it muſt have been with bitter anguiſh, and with all thoſe excruciating horrors, which the juſt dread of their offended Maker and Sovereign tended to raiſe. So that all mankind might well have been deſcribed *ſpirits in priſon*, when the Great Meſſiah came to releaſe them from their bondage, to redeem and reſtore them. They were not only impriſoned by the ſtrong holds of death, which they could never break through by their own ſtrength, but by the ſtill more galling fetters of ſin which they could never remove, from which they could deviſe no poſſible methods to extricate themſelves.

We have now only to ſhew, in what ſenſe it was that our Lord went, and preached to theſe ſpirits in priſon. And, this we learn, from the

words immediately preceding the text, was by his death and reſurrection. After theſe events, *having gone forth*, as the word πορευθεις, ſhould have been rendered, that is, having aſcended to heaven, he, by his apoſtles, and upon the foundation of his victory over the grave, publiſhed his goſpel to the lame and the blind, and to thoſe that were afar off as well as to thoſe that were nigh. His death, in defence of that divine religion which he taught, was a proof that he himſelf was fully convinced of the infallible truth of all his doctrines: and, his reſurrection from the dead, was a demonſtration, that he was indeed the well-beloved of the Father, his authoriſed meſſenger, and that the God of truth was the ſupreme, original author of that great ſalvation, which has ſounded in our ears. By his death and reſurrection, therefore, he has preached liberty to the captives, opened the priſon doors which darkened and confined the old world, and called, and aſſiſted the priſoners to come forth out of their priſon houſe. By his death and reſurrection he has aſcertained to us, beyond the poſſibility of deception, that all the good tidings of great joy which the goſpel contains are the meſſages of God, who cannot lie, nor ſuffer any poſſible change or ſhadow of turning; and that all the promiſes and threatenings, and all the terms of acceptance propoſed to us in the goſpel, are likewiſe divine emanations from the God of all power, wiſdom, mercy, and love. Theſe were, accordingly, the grand points upon which all the apoſtles built the divine authority and infinite

infinite importance of our holy religion.* If Chriſt be not riſen, ſaid they, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain. But Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and become the firſt fruits of thoſe that ſleep: therefore, God was with him, and all the doctrines he taught were the great truths of God; and, therefore, we alſo ſhall be raiſed, and ſhortly appear before his aweful tribunal, to give an account of the deeds that we have done in the body, when the wicked ſhall be puniſhed with an everlaſting deſtruction, but all the truly penitent and reformed, crowned with everlaſting ſalvation. And, indeed, without the death of Chriſt, we cannot think of any other method, by which the divinity of our religion could have been ſo fully confirmed to us. For had he been before his crucifixion carried up viſibly into heaven, though the ſpectators might hence aſſuredly have concluded that he was a perſon in high favour with God, and alſo that he was the faithful meſſenger of God, yet to thoſe who would otherwiſe have doubted the poſſibility of a revival from death, nothing but the real reſurrection of a real man, who had been really dead, could have wrought a thorough conviction. But the death and reſurrection of Chriſt place every thing upon a ſure bottom, and prove all that we can wiſh them to prove. We

* Agreeably hereto the apoſtle adds in the 21ſt and 22d verſes—*Baptiſm* (the token of our admiſſion to the privileges of chriſtianity) *doth alſo now ſave us—through*, or *by means* of *the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject unto him.* VIGILIUS.

are ſure that no being can raiſe from the dead, or reſtore life to thoſe from whom it is once taken, but God the author of all being, or thoſe who are ſent by him, and act immediately under his authority and by his power, and we are ſure that God would not give his ſeal to a liar. We are ſure, therefore, that chriſtianity is true, and that our Lord, by the moſt irreſiſtible arguments at firſt preached, and is ſtill preaching to the ſpirits in priſon; that is, we are ſure, that the goſpel ſalvation is founded upon the moſt inconteſtible evidences, even the reſurrection of Chriſt our Lord from the dead.

RATIONALIS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

I ſend you a few detached remarks, out of three different papers on the Socinian controverſy. Number 1. is an anſwer to the two firſt pieces of Chariſtes, entitled, A Defence of Dr. Lardner, vol. II. of your Repoſitory for 1770, No. 1. and No. 2. p. 65—83. occaſioned by my Remarks, publiſhed in vol. I. of your Repoſitory for 1769, p. 431. Number 2. contains remarks on the laſt piece of Chariſtes, publiſhed in vol. III. of your Repoſitory, for 1771, p. 58. Number 3. contains remarks on Dr. Dawſon's ſermons on the Logos. From number 1. accept the following extracts.

I deny

I DENY that I ever admitted the juſtneſs of Dr. Lardner's obſervations on the goſpel of St. John, and after certain obſervations thus proceed. To underſtand the goſpel of St. John, it is neceſſary to know the hiſtory of the chriſtian church about that time, and the age immediately ſucceeding. Some ancient ſects of heretics (as they were then called) entertained very weak and extravagant notions of Almighty God, and our Lord Chriſt. I have no ſuſpicion that the Socinians entertain thoſe notions; but in the denial of his pre-exiſtence, and, I will take the liberty to add, in the opinion that he was a mere man, both agree. It is alſo the opinion of the moſt learned in the ancient hiſtory of the church, that the preface of the apoſtle John's goſpel, was intended, though leſs directly, as a proteſt againſt thoſe errors, and a preſervative from them. Now if the apoſtle John wrote his goſpel with this view, it is a ſufficient refutation of the Socinian doctrine, with thoſe who admit his inſpiration in the moſt moderate ſenſe of the term. Room can hardly be allowed for the full illuſtration of the arguments, in ſupport of this aſſertion. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that on this ſuppoſition, the ſenſe put upon the firſt chapter of St. John's goſpel, is plain, eaſy, natural; but ſo far as I remember upon any other, forced and far fetched. If any one ſhall ſay, that this is only my aſſertion, I refer the learned reader to the ancient hiſtory of the church, and to the proofs of it (viz. of my aſſertion) which will ariſe from the compariſon of

the apoſtle John's preface to the goſpel, and the paſſages in his epiſtles relating to our Lord Chriſt, with the errors as to the nature and mode of his exiſtence, which it is ſaid they were intended to refute; and I believe that he will be convinced with me, that this hypotheſis is the true key to the meaning of the evangeliſt on this ſubject. He will ſee the reaſon of the difference betwixt the apoſtle John and the reſt of the evangeliſts. I mean, not with regard to truth and ſubſtance, but the new and very extraordinary ſtile and manner of writing uſed by the apoſtle John on this ſubject, which, on every other ſuppoſition, is altogether unaccountable, and which ſeems to me very extraordinary; none of the critics on the Socinian ſide, have ſo much as attempted to account for it. He will ſee I had obſerved in the firſt piece, that our Lord's exaltation was unaccountable, if his pre-exiſtence and his ſuperior dignity in that ſtate were denied; it is added, and his miraculous birth and conception appear to me equally unaccountable. To this ſubject we may, with great propriety, apply the maxim of the poet, *Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.* What occaſion, it may be aſked (and it will not eaſily be anſwered) was there for all this parade, this waſte of miracles, to bring into the world one who, in his infant ſtate, (which according to the Socinians was his original ſtate) was not, nor could poſſibly be greater than Chariſtes, myſelf, or the moſt inconſiderable individual of mankind? If Chariſtes can account upon his principles for the miraculous conception, &c. I wiſh he would do it; if he

would

would ſupport the cauſe he defends, he muſt do it. If he cannot, he muſt deny, as others have done before him, the truth of thoſe parts of the goſpel hiſtory which relate to this ſubject. But then, another difficulty will meet him, in my opinion equally great, viz. the difficulty of aſcertaining and fixing the criterion, by which we are to diſtinguiſh the ſpurious parts of the goſpel hiſtory, from thoſe that are genuine and authentic. For my part, if I believed that our Lord exiſted not in a ſtate of ſuperior dignity before his incarnation, as well as that he was born a mere human being (I take both theſe together) I ſhould think it moſt probable, that he came into the world in the common courſe of nature, and that he was as much the ſon of Joſeph as of Mary. This was, indeed, the opinion of an ancient ſect who denied the pre-exiſtence, and I really think that they were more conſiſtent with themſelves, than my good friend the Remarker, and his adherents are, or can be, if the truth of their grand diſtinguiſhing principle, viz. the non pre-exiſtence of our Lord, is ſuppoſed.

If you think it convenient, and ſhall continue your excellent Repoſitory, I will ſend you the account above referred to, for ſome future number, on the leaſt intimation that it will be acceptable; but having thrown out this hint, I am ready to think, that ſome of your learned readers will do it better, and I wiſh they would ſave me the trouble.

From number 2. I can only ſend the following detached remarks. The chief objection made

made by Chariſtes, is founded on the difficulty I had myſelf acknowledged and fairly ſtated (in the poſtſcript to my letter of Remarks in Vol. I. of your Repoſitory, p. 440) and which does not, that I can perceive, receive any additional ſtrength from his repreſentation. Many things may be offered, if not as a perfect ſolution, at leaſt as great abatements of it. The notions, perhaps, of ſome well-meaning Arians, reſpecting the original dignity of our Lord, are as much too high, as thoſe of the Socinians are too low and diſparaging: Our Lord Chriſt is, indeed, the firſt being, next to the Supreme, but ſtill far inferior, and as diſtant from him as finite from infinity. The creation and ſupport of all things are aſcribed to him, but only as the inſtrument of the Moſt High, and under him, and by his appointment. What ſublime and magnificent ſpheres of action may be allotted to beings, far inferior to our Lord Chriſt, but yet no greater than are proportioned to the powers with which he hath inveſted them, who can tell? But to ſuppoſe that they may be very grand and extenſive, does not at all leſſen or detract from, but may rather ſerve to heighten our ideas of the Creator and ſupreme Lord of all. Our notions, indeed, of theſe, viz. theſe allotted ſpheres of action may exceed, and be incompatible, in the very nature of things, with the condition and rank of the moſt glorious of all created and dependent beings. But the power and province of our Lord, great as they are, may be magnified beyond the truth, on the imaginary evidence of paſſages in the New Teſtament miſ-

underſtood,

underſtood, and the expreſſions relating to the creation and ſupport of all things by our bleſſed Lord, which ſeem to be abſolute and univerſal, may be confined to this ſyſtem, and ſome of them (his original dignity alone conſidered) even to this globe, by an eaſy and common figure, at leaſt not bolder than thoſe, to which gentlemen of the Socinian perſuaſion have continual recourſe.

The common and impartial Lord and Father of the univerſe, hath ſent this great perſonage, viz. his beloved ſon, into the world, to be our redeemer and the reſtorer of pure and uncorrupted religion: but the benefits may redound equally to all the ſyſtems in his boundleſs empire, and to all the worlds of which they are compoſed, inhabited by intelligent natures. The proceedings of Almighty God towards us, may be held up for their admonition and inſtruction. The ſame finiſhed example of moral virtues in the perſon of our Lord (although this world was the ſcene of them) may be exhibited to them. And ſince, perhaps, other intelligent beings may fall from their integrity, and be in ſome reſpects liable to ſin and error, the ſame terms of favour and acceptance with Almighty God through our Lord Chriſt (though his perſonal miniſtry was confined to this world) may be propoſed to them and to all. Some of theſe thoughts are greatly countenanced by thoſe paſſages, in which God's proceedings with the fallen angels are held up, and recommended to the ſerious regard of mankind, and by thoſe in which the extraordinary wiſdom and grace of his dealings with men by the miniſtry of Chriſt, are repreſented

ſented as not beneath the notice of the higheſt orders of beings, and as, in fact, the objects of their attention.

Theſe proceedings of Almighty God muſt, therefore, have been revealed to them, and if ſo, why might they not to other worlds, and even to other ſyſtems? I proceed to ſhew at large, how, upon this ſtate of the caſe, an anſwer may be given to all his queries or objections: and in anſwer to that, in No. 1. Vol. III. of your Repoſitory, page 61, line 23—28. it is obſerved, that the ſingle miſſion of our Lord, appears to be ſufficient, at leaſt for any thing that can be ſhewn to the contrary on the Arian principles, whether that miſſion be deemed neceſſary or expedient. And to ſuppoſe (according to this hypotheſis) that the method of God's proceeding with all intelligent creatures is the ſame, ſo far as their circumſtances are the ſame; and that as they have all with this reſtriction, the ſame laws and rules of conduct, the terms of acceptance are the ſame, and that they have one and the ſame law-giver and redeemer; is moſt agreeable to the attributes of that being, with whom there is no reſpect of perſons, as well as to the noble and beautiful ſimplicity ſo conſpicuous in the frame and courſe of nature, in which, all is reducible to a few general laws, and according to which, we ſee a great and endleſs variety of effects, which are the reſult of one and the ſame principle, and which often flow from the ſingle operation of one and the ſame cauſe. There is one remarkable paſſage in the piece of Chariſtes juſt referred to, p. 64, 65. which I muſt not omit. The ſubſtance of it is, that a ſtate of imprisonment

priſonment in a fleſhly tabernacle, ſubject to human frailties and infirmities muſt, to ſo glorious a being as the Arians repreſent our Lord Chriſt, be (as biſhop Clayton expreſſes it) a hell upon earth. In anſwer to this, my Remarker muſt be told, that he forgets the true ſtate of the caſe, no ſuch glorious ſpirit was thus impriſoned in fleſh. It was the Logos, when converted into a human ſoul, and ſuited, in a great meaſure, like ours, to the preſent ſtate and condition of human nature and life.

Nevertheleſs, the conſciouſneſs and remembrance which our Lord, even in that ſtate, ſtill retained of his former dignity, added (no doubt) to the humiliation and ſufferings of his life, and ſeems beſt to account for the extremity of his agonies in death, or the ſcenes immediately preceding; which, on the Socinian ſcheme, and without taking this into our view, may be thought to ſink his character below that of ſome other perſons, who ſeem to have behaved with equal ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and with greater intrepidity and calmneſs. If my Remarker ſhall object that what I have ſaid of the benefits of our Lord's miſſion redounding to all worlds, &c. are only ſuppoſitions, I muſt deſire him to recollect, that a conſiderable part of his laſt remarks, conſiſts chiefly of ſuppoſitions, or of arguments founded upon them, and the impartial reader muſt judge for himſelf which are the moſt probable.

From number 3. accept the few hints which follow.—If the doctor (Dawſon) means by his Remarks on John iii. 13, p. 78. of his book, that this

this text can admit of no literal ſenſe but what is abſurd and contradictory, it is anſwered, that this repreſentation is founded upon his taking it for granted, that the words ο ων (εν τω ουρανω) ſignify, as in our tranſlation, *which is* in heaven, but I aſſert, that they ſhould be tranſlated *which was.* This is manifeſtly the meaning of the ſame words ο ων John iii. 31. and if you want any further authority, take that of the doctor himſelf, who acknowledges, only two or three pages before, that the words ο ων in John i. 18. may be thus rendered, and he ſeems even to give the preference to this tranſlation, vid. p. 75. of the doctor's book upon the Logos. Now if this tranſlation be admitted, there is no foundation at all for the doctor's triumph over the advocates for a literal ſenſe of the abovementioned text, viz. John iii. 13. Such a one occurs as is very eaſy and natural, at leaſt not chargeable with any groſs contradictions. I have other texts in which the expreſſions, *coming from God, from the Father, coming down from heaven,* refer to a local deſcent, or to the exiſtence of our Lord, prior to his incarnation, and cannot be underſtood, according to the doctor's notion, in a figurative ſenſe of his receiving his doctrine from heaven. But I ſhall only mention ſome hints of remarks on John xvi. 28. We may obſerve on the former clauſes of the text, viz. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world:* that if, according to Dr. Dawſon, they mean no more than that our Lord was diſtinguiſhed by extraordinary revelations from his God and Father,

ther and that he was commiſſioned to publiſh them to the world, the particular propriety of the words, at the time they were ſpoken by our Lord, does not appear, which certainly is an argument (conſidering how they ſtand connected) againſt taking them in this ſenſe. And yet, on the other hand, if any one ſhall think there is ſuch a propriety in them when taken in the juſt mentioned ſenſe (viz. that our Lord was a divine teacher and diſtinguiſhed with revelations from God) it will be no argument for it, *i. e.* no argument for this ſenſe excluſive of any other; nor any objection at all to ſuch a paraphraſe and explication as an Arian would give. Becauſe the Arian explication includes in it, and, of courſe, ſuppoſes the Socinian (viz. that our Lord's commiſſion and inſtructions were from heaven) only it includes in it a great deal more, viz. his original and deſcent from God, from heaven, the place of his moſt glorious manifeſtation; and therefore, the former clauſes of the text (as abovementioned) taken in the Arian ſenſe, not only anſwer every purpoſe that could be ſerved by them taken in Dr. Dawſon's ſenſe, but they are yet more ſtrongly calculated for the encouragement of our Lord's diſciples; and again we may obſerve, as we might on ſome other texts, that as the latter expreſſions (in it) *of leaving the world and going to the Father*, are to be literally underſtood, the former, which are oppoſed to them, muſt be taken in the ſame ſenſe.

But this is not all; for the apoſtles themſelves, who heard theſe words of our Lord, and who might,

might, perhaps, underſtand him as well as Dr. Dawſon himſelf, expreſsly declare, that they took his words in the plain and literal ſenſe. For this, in my apprehenſion, is the meaning of what they ſay, John xvi. 29. *Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb.* Now if, after all the Rev. Doctor can ſhew that the former clauſes of John xvi. 28. *viz. I came forth from the Father, and, &c.* muſt be taken in a figurative ſenſe; and that, conſequently, no argument can be drawn from thence for our Lord's pre-exiſtence; I will not ſay with Old Tertullian, I adore the fullneſs of the ſcripture; but I admire its wonderful ſuppleneſs and difficulty. I could point out the inſufficiency (to ſay the leaſt) of the doctor's arguments in other inſtances.

The force of a great part of them turns upon theſe two fancies. 1. That as our Lord was a mere man during his incarnation, he could, therefore, never have been greater in any prior ſtate of exiſtence. The ſecond is, that the Arians (who aſſert our Lord's pre-exiſtence) muſt, in order to be conſiſtent with themſelves, believe that all his miracles were wrought, as well as other articles relating to his miniſtry, performed by the divinity (a divinity diſtinct from that of the Father) reſident in himſelf, in his ſtate of incarnation, or that the miracles, &c. as juſt mentioned, were wrought, as ſome, I ſuppoſe, would expreſs it, (with equal propriety) by his own divinity. Unleſs theſe fancies of the doctor be admitted, a great part of his arguments falls to the ground.

Now I deny them both; and if the doctor will be kind enough to prove them, I will be bold

bold to ſay, that, of all his pieces, this will ever be regarded as the moſt glorious monument of his genius.

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To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

TO the remarks which I have already ſent you, on the Harmony of the Evangeliſts, pleaſe to add the following:

1. *Of the inſults which Jeſus received at the houſe of the High-Prieſt.*

Luke ſpeaks of the denial of Peter, and the inſults which Jeſus received at the houſe of the High-Prieſt, as preceding the aſſembly of the chief prieſts to examine him, and his confeſſion that he was the Chriſt. This aſſembly and examination, he ſays, were *when it was day*, xxii. 66. Matthew expreſsly ſays, that the inſults were after his examination, xxvi. 67. Indeed, both Matthew xxvii. 1. and Mark xv. 1. ſpeak of an aſſembly of the chief prieſts when it was day; but this was after his examination, and was only for the purpoſe of conſulting among themſelves in what manner they ſhould get their ſentence put in execution; and therefore they make no mention of Jeſus being brought before them at that time. The reſolution which they came to at this ſecond meeting, was to carry Jeſus bound to Pilate, which they did immediately.

2. *Of the circumſtances attending Peter's denial of Jeſus.*

There is a pretty conſiderable variation in the accounts which the different evangeliſts give of the circumſtances attending Peter's denial of Chriſt. According to Matthew, our Lord told Peter, that before the cock crew, he ſhould deny him thrice, xxvi. 34. And he repreſents him as denying him three times diſtinctly, before the cock crew; the two firſt times at the interrogation of two different women, and laſtly, of thoſe who were ſtanding by, xxvi. 69—75.

Mark ſays, that our Lord told Peter, that before the cock crew twice he ſhould deny him thrice, xiv. 13. And he repreſents the firſt cock crowing after the firſt denial. The two firſt denials, according to this evangeliſt, were occaſioned by the interrogations of the ſame woman, and the third by that of the ſtanders-by, xiv. 66—72.

Luke, like Matthew, ſays that Chriſt told Peter, that before the cock crew he ſhould deny him thrice, xxii. 34. but he repreſents the firſt denial only as occaſioned by the interrogation of a woman, and the ſecond and third at that of two different men. He alſo mentions the circumſtance of our Lord's *looking at Peter* after the crowing of the cock, as if that alone had not been ſufficient to awaken his recollection, xxii. 25—62.

John ſays, that Jeſus told Peter, that before the cock crew he ſhould deny him thrice, xiii. 38. and he ſays that the firſt denial was at the inter-

rogation

rogation of a woman who kept the door, on his entrance (for it is mentioned before the fire is ſpoken of) the ſecond time at that of ſeveral perſons who were warming themſelves, and the third time at that of a relation of the man whoſe ear was cut off, and who alledged that he had ſeen Peter in the garden.

It ſeems probable that Matthew and John, who heard Jeſus, and who were preſent when Jeſus foretold the denial of Peter, have given the true account with reſpect to the number of cock crowings, and that the ſecond crowing of the cock was an addition, which the jingle of *twice* and *thrice* might, perhaps, recommend to thoſe perſons from whom Mark (who was not preſent) had his account. Matthew and John, however, differ with reſpect to the perſons who interrogated Peter. Matthew alſo mentions no interrogation till after the inſults which Jeſus met with; and yet having probably heard ſomething of his being interrogated at the door, he ſpeaks of his going to the door afterwards, and being then interrogated the ſecond time. The account of John, who was in the houſe at the time, may certainly be depended upon as the moſt exact, eſpecially as he had ſeen thoſe of the other evangeliſts. John makes no mention of Chriſt's *looking on Peter*; and, indeed, it is not very probable that the chief prieſts were aſſembled either in the ſame place where the ſervants were making a fire, or in any room from whence they could be ſeen by the ſervants at the common hearth.

3. Of the circumſtances which attended the reſurrection of Jeſus.

Much has been written by ſeveral modern divines, on the harmony of the different accounts which are given by the four evangeliſts, of the circumſtances attending the reſurrection of Chriſt; and I believe it may be poſſible to draw up a narrative, which ſhall comprize all the different accounts, and be conſiſtent with itſelf; but to me it is evident, that if the different writers had had exactly the ſame ideas of the circumſtances attending that event, they would not have written as they have done concerning it.

Matthew ſays, xxviii. 1, &c. that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went, at the break of day, to ſee the ſepulchre, but an angel had rolled away the ſtone, and ſat upon it. This angel bade them tell the diſciples, that Jeſus was riſen from the dead; and as they were making haſte to deliver that meſſuage, Jeſus himſelf appeared to them, and they fell down and held him by the feet, but he bade them go and tell his diſciples to meet him in Galilee.

Mark ſays, xvi. 1, &c. that, at ſun riſe, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, going to anoint the body of Jeſus, found the ſepulchre open; and going in, ſaw a young man ſitting on the right hand, who told them that Jeſus was riſen, and bade them tell his diſciples to meet

meet him in Galilee. Afterwards this evangeliſt informs us that Jeſus, having riſen early in the morning, appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, who went and informed the diſciples, but was not believed by them.

Luke ſays, xxiv. 1, &c. that many women who had followed Jeſus from Galilee, and others with them, going with ſpices, found the ſtone rolled away; and going into the ſepulchre found not the body of Jeſus; and that while they were in doubt, two men ſtood by them, who ſaid that he was riſen; and that they went and told the diſciples, who did not believe them; but that Peter ran to the ſepulchre, and ſeeing the grave clothes, wondered very much.

John, who is the moſt circumſtantial in his relation, ſays, xx. 1, &c. that while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene went to the ſepulchre; and upon ſeeing the ſtone taken away, ran to inform Peter and John. Upon this, theſe two diſciples ran to the place, and finding the clothes only, returned; but that Mary, who ſtood without, and wept, on looking into the ſepulchre, ſaw two angels, ſitting one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body had laid; and while ſhe was aſking them concerning the body, Jeſus himſelf appeared to her, and bade her go and tell his diſciples that he was riſen.

To me it appears not very eaſy to ſuppoſe that theſe different accounts were written by perſons who had preciſely the ſame ideas of the events, and of the order of them; but the va-

riations are ſuch, that it is not worth the while of any friend of chriſtianity to take pains to reconcile them. After conſidering and comparing all theſe accounts, my own ideas of the affair are as follows.

The ſtone was rolled from the ſepulchre, Jeſus roſe, and the guard were diſperſed, ſome time before day-break. Preſently after, the women came with their ſpices, intending to embalm the body; but recollecting that the ſtone was too large for them to remove, they were at a loſs what to do, when they were ſurpriſed to find it already rolled away, and the body gone. Being exceedingly aſtoniſhed at this, they diſperſed themſelves to different places, to inform the diſciples of what they had ſeen; for it is not at all probable, that, in their preſent ſtate of fear and conſternation, they were all together. Mary Magdalene went to Peter and John, who immediately ran to the ſepulchre, followed by Mary herſelf; who probably arrived there, the ſecond time, before theſe two diſciples had left the place, but ſtaying longer than they did, and looking into the ſepulchre, after they were gone, ſhe ſaw firſt the two angels, and then Jeſus himſelf.

By this time, it is probable, that moſt of his diſciples were gone together, in conſequence of the news they had heard, when Mary joined them, and informed them that ſhe had ſeen Jeſus himſelf, but they gave no credit to her. Some time the ſame day, when the diſciples were ſeparated, Jeſus appeared to Peter alone, Luke xxiv. 34. who, upon this, probably aſſembled

bled as many of the diſciples as he could, to inform them of it; but Thomas was out of the way. After the appearance of Peter, our Lord joined the two diſciples who were going to Emmaus, and diſcovered himſelf to them; upon which they immediately returned to Jeruſalem, and going to the place where the diſciples were aſſembled, were informed by them that Jeſus had appeared to Peter; and while they were giving an account of the manner, in which he had made himſelf known to them alſo, Jeſus himſelf appeared to them, and eat with them. Thomas being informed of this, would not believe; but that day ſevennight, Jeſus appeared to them when Thomas was preſent, and was fully ſatisfied. After this, all the diſciples went to Galilee, where Jeſus was ſeen by them, and the other diſciples, many of whom reſided in Galilee; and returning to Jeruſalem, he aſcended to heaven in the preſence of many of them, from the Mount of Olives.

I take it for granted, that John would not have given ſo circumſtantial an account, as he has done of the manner in which the reſurrection was firſt notified, if it had not been for the ſake of being more exact than the other evangeliſts had been. I have, therefore, followed his account, and think that the variations in the other evangeliſts, which cannot be eaſily reconciled with it, muſt be aſcribed to their being miſinformed, and miſtaken concerning them. But they are things of no moment; ſo that the variations with reſpect to them, ſerve to make

the general account of the reſurrection the *more* and not the *leſs* credible.

All the evangeliſts, except John, repreſent the women as having ſeen the viſion of angels before any of them had been with the apoſtles, but the account which John gives, makes the diſcovery of the reſurrection more gradual and pleaſing. It is alſo to be obſerved, that the manner in which they deſcribe this viſion is remarkably different.

I almoſt think that Luke had no idea of Chriſt being ſeen by the diſciples in Galilee; for he not only takes no notice of any meſſage from the angels to that purpoſe, but, in the interview which he ſpeaks of Jeſus having with the diſciples on the evening of the ſame day, he repreſents him as commanding them *to ſtay in the city of Jeruſalem*, till they ſhould be indued with power from on high. The ſame account he alſo gives, Acts i. 4. and then immediately proceeds to the hiſtory of the aſcenſion from the Mount of Olives.

LIBERIUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

The few following thoughts on the remaining objections of Paulinus, in your laſt number, from page 195, *are ſubmitted to your diſcretion, by*

Gentlemen, your very humble ſervant,

W. W.

PAULINUS himſelf is not clear, he ſays, that ſome part of the 68th Pſalm does not refer to the kingdom of the Meſſiah in the latter days; and why, then, not the 18th verſe, which he ſeems to object againſt? *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men; for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell amongſt them.* Who ſo properly received gifts for men as Chriſt after his aſcenſion? And is not he prophetically ſtiled by Iſaiah, עמנואל, *God is with us*; the auxiliary verb *is* being often underſtood in theſe ſhort ſignificative titles given in ſcripture to things, altars, perſons, or communities. So יהוה צדקנו, *Jehovah is our Juſtifier*, a name given prophetically by Jeremiah to the city Jeruſalem, Jer. xxxiii. 16. and to Iſrael, or the people, ch. xxiii. 6. the relative לה in this place, as well as ו in the other, I am perſuaded, refers to the nearer antecedent, and not to the remote one, *the Branch*, as it is commonly underſtood. Both prophecies relate to the ſame event, to the goſpel times, and are but a repetition the one of the other. St. Paul ſeems plainly to allude

to

to this name, Rom. viii. 33. and has even literally tranſlated it Θεος ο δικαιων.

As to Heb. ii. 11. I neither can nor need, I think, give a better account than what Mr. Pierce has done in his paraphraſe and notes on the place.

With regard to Heb. iv. 7—9. I can ſee no room at all for an objection. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *harden not your hearts like your fathers, &c. unto whom God ſware in his wrath, they ſhall not enter into my reſt.* The plain meaning of which is, harden not *your* hearts, leſt God likewiſe ſwear in his wrath that *you* ſhall not enter into his reſt; which muſt mean a reſt that then ſtill remained for the good people among them, who had long ſince already entered into the earthly Canaan; as the author to the Hebrews himſelf obſerves.

As to St. Paul's argument, by which he checks the forwardneſs of ſome women at that time, in being ſo ready to prate ungiftedly in their public religious aſſemblies, I leave it, as Paulinus has done, to the modeſt and diſcreet of that ſex to judge, for I perceive no flaw in the argument.

In anſwer to Paulinus's objection to Rom. vii. 1—6. I refer him to what Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor have largely offered on the place: and as to St. Paul's allegory, to Mr. Pierce upon Gal. iv. 21—31.

Page 204. "As we Chriſtians are initiated, or ſignified to be initiated into Chriſt, as his diſciples, by baptiſm, and confirmed ſuch in the Lord's ſupper, ſo were the Iſraelites to Moſes,

as

as their prophet and leader, by thoſe grand miracles ſpecified; and the rock, whoſe miraculous waters followed them, might well repreſent Chriſt the fountain of living waters, and might be deſigned to repreſent him." Where, then, is the abſurdity of this writer's ſaying, *that Rock was Chriſt*, any more than our Saviour's ſaying, *this Bread is my Body?* Our Saviour, as well as St. Paul, often refers to a ſpiritual and more glorious ſenſe of ſeveral paſſages in the Old Teſtament, as well as of his own ſpeeches couched in the letter. *The words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit and they are life.* He explained theſe things, firſt or laſt, to his diſciples, but the veil remained on the heart of the obſtinate unbelieving Jews, and does ſo to this day.

I conſider Rom. viii. 26, 27. as a beautiful deſcription of that loſs a pious mind may be at what to pray for, when yet his heart is warm with inward devotion towards God; which happy frame of mind is known to God, proceeds from him, and will be anſwered by him in a better manner than the devout perſon can expreſs or conceive. This may often be the caſe of a good perſon in trouble or lowneſs of ſpirits, and was perhaps the caſe of our Saviour himſelf when in his agony in the garden.

As to all that follows, page 206, &c. I obſerve, that ever ſo great variety of figures, alluſions, and compariſons by which the death of Chriſt, or the union betwixt him and his followers are repreſented, may each agree in ſome circumſtance or other, and compariſons are never expected to run upon all four. The ancient and

and eaſtern language borders very much upon the ancient hieroglyphic way of writing (perhaps took its riſe from it) and may not ſuit with the over-ſtrained delicacy or nicety of modern criticiſm in theſe colder climates. The true ſcripture critic ſhould, in his imagination, remove himſelf about 700 leagues ſouth-eaſt in ſituation, and ſeventeen or twenty centuries back in time.

Suppoſing, after all, there was not the utmoſt ſyllogiſtical accuracy in ſome of St. Paul's arguments, in the ſenſe in which we are liable, at this diſtance, to take them; it would not I apprehend, at all impeach either his inſpiration, his ſincerity, or his good ſenſe; and Paulinus, I believe, thinks ſo too.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

If you think the following attempt to explain the meaning of 1 Peter v. 8. *worth your attention, you will be ſo good as to inſert it in your uſeful work.* X. Y.

THE apoſtle begins this epiſtle with urging motives to the ſtrangers (the converts from idolatry to chriſtianity) to whom he addreſſes it, to induce them, with ſteadineſs and an humble confidence in God, to ſupport themſelves under any perſecutions they might at preſent ſuffer, or were expoſed to on account of their chriſtian profeſſion. Then, after preſcribing to them rules for their public conduct as members

members of the civil ſtate, and towards each other as chriſtians, at the cloſe of his epiſtle he returns to the ſubject with which he firſt ſet out: *Be clothed* (ſays he) *with humility, for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourſeves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be ſober; be vigilant:* becauſe *your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour. Whom reſiſt ſteadfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.*

The eighth verſe, as it ſtands in our tranſlation, ſeems to have no connection with the ſubject on which the apoſtle is evidently writing, viz. the perſecutions they were expoſed to, in common with their brethren in other parts of the world, on account of their faith in Chriſt. But a little attention to the original will, I think, eaſily clear up this matter. The words as they ſtand there are, ver. 8. Νηψατε, γρηγορησατε, οτι ο αντιδικος υμων διαβολος, ως λεων ωρυομενος, περιπατει ζητων τινα καταπιη. The obvious tranſlation of which is, "Be ſober or cautious, be vigilant, becauſe the adverſary, your accuſer, like a roaring lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour." The word αντιδικος may either mean in general, in this place, any perſons who were, at that time, active in bringing chriſtians, by their accuſations, before courts

courts of judicature; or, perhaps, Nero may particularly be alluded to; ſince the firſt perſecution againſt the chriſtians begun (in conſequence of a falſe accuſation againſt them, as being concerned in burning the city) *A.D. 65. and of Nero, 11. And this epiſtle is ſuppoſed, by Dr. Benſon, to have been written about the year 67.

Had the meaning of the apoſtle been what the common tranſlation conveys to us, inſtead of ο αντιδικος υμων διαβολος, &c. the original would have been ανθιδικος υμων ο διαβολος, &c. where the article ο is transferred from αντιδικος to διαβολος; but as all the manuſcripts agree in placing it before αντιδικος, the common grammatical conſtruction will naturally lead us to apply υμων to διαβολος inſtead of αντιδικος.

I am ſurprized that this interpretation has eſcaped the notice of all the commentators on this epiſtle who have fallen in my way, but particularly the learned Dr. Benſon: who, though he evidently does not underſtand it in the commonly-received ſenſe; yet does not appear to me to have entered entirely into the meaning of the apoſtle in this place.

* Igitur primum correpti (Chriſtiani) qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis, convicti ſunt. Tac. Ann. lib. 15. par. 44. And the whole tenor of this epiſtle ſeems to indicate, that it was written either during the time, or ſoon after ſome perſecution of the chriſtians.

To the Editors of the Theological Repoſitory.

GENTLEMEN,

TO my former obſervations on *Chriſt's agony in the garden*, tending to prove that *the bloody ſweat* was a natural phenomenon, the effect of great mental agitation, pleaſe to add the following facts.

A criminal, in ſome part of Italy, a perſon in perfect health, was ſeized with extreme terror on being ſentenced to die, and ſweat blood ſo very profuſely, that, if I recollect aright, he died before he could be got to the place of execution. A friend of mine, who mentioned this fact to me, promiſed to ſend me a particular account of it, with the proper authorities; but not arriving in time, I am obliged to mention it only in general. If the firſt volume of this work be reprinted, I will endeavour to procure his account.

Mr. Samuel Taylor, of Rochdale in Lancaſhire, a perſon of a fair ſkin, and rather delicate conſtitution, having been for ſome time in a declining way, being told by his apothecary, whom he interrogated on the ſubject, that he was near death, of which he had not been apprehenſive, was ſeized with an univerſal tremor and terror of mind, during which he ſweated moſt profuſely, and blood was perceived to iſſue from three places in his forehead. A perſon who ſat up with him and his ſervant, in order to ſatisfy themſelves concerning this extraordinary circumſtance, without alarming him, wiped

wiped his face with a clean white handkerchief, and examined it at their leiſure. In about half an hour Mr. Taylor perfectly recovered himſelf, and died with great compoſure. This was in 1769. A relation of Mr. Taylor's, who ſaw the place from which the blood had iſſued, which, he ſays, were orifices of the bigneſs of large pins' heads, gave me this information, with leave to make it public, in confirmation of the obſervations in the Repoſitory.

CLEMENS.

THE CONCLUSION.

THREE volumes of this work being now completed, it is thought proper to make a pauſe in the publication. One principal reaſon for this, it is frankly acknowledged, is the little demand there has been for it, on which account the publiſher has by no means been indemnified. It is hoped, however, that when the firſt volume ſhall be reprinted (for want of which many perſons have been diſcouraged from purchaſing the ſucceeding volumes) the ſale will go on better, which will encourage the director to reſume the publication; and therefore the friends and the chief contributors to this work are deſired not to loſe ſight of it, or to intermit any of the ſtudies and inquiries in which they may have been engaged with a view to it. Notice will be given in the public papers whenever the ſcheme is revived.

Theſe

Theſe three volumes muſt be allowed to contain many truly original, and exceedingly valuable tracts, tending to illuſtrate ſeveral very intereſting ſubjects of theological inquiry, eſpecially the controverſies relating to the doctrine of atonement, the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of the ſcriptures; and the laſt of theſe queſtions has been examined not ſo much in the way of general *argument*, as by the allegation of ſuch *facts* relating to compoſition of the books of the New Teſtament, as cannot but have the greateſt weight in determining the controverſy one way or the other. Alſo, excluſive of ſuch general queſtions as theſe, it muſt be allowed by the moſt prejudiced, that theſe three volumes contain many ingenious and happy illuſtrations of ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture, which have no relation to any particular controverſy.

That the work has been conducted with the utmoſt fairneſs and impartiality, with reſpect to thoſe perſons who have ſent papers to it, the contents themſelves will, in ſome meaſure, prove; and with reſpect to what has not appeared in public, the director may venture to aſſert his impartiality, without the leaſt apprehenſion of its being controverted by any perſon whatever. That the readers of the Repoſitory may have an opportunity of ſatisfying themſelves in ſome meaſure on this ſubject (which is of the greateſt conſequence with reſpect to their confidence in him on any future occaſion) he thinks proper to declare, that his own ſignatures have been CLEMENS, LIBERIUS and PAULINUS, and no

other. Now any perſon concerned may eaſily examine whether the director of this publication has availed himſelf of his ſituation, to ſuppreſs any thing that has been ſent to him contrary to the ſentiments advanced under thoſe characters. He has even cloſed the work without taking that opportunity of making any reply to what has been advanced againſt his particular opinions, becauſe thoſe who have called them in queſtion would not have it in their power to reply again. Indeed he has, on this account, very ſeldom animadverted upon any papers whatever. He thinks himſelf particularly obliged to W. W. for the pains he has taken to examine the papers ſigned PAULINUS, and acknowledges that, in ſeveral reſpects, he has received much ſatisfaction from his ingenious remarks, though he doth not think that he hath removed all the difficulties. He forbears, however, to be particular, becauſe he could not be ſo without taking an unfair advantage.

Though the director of this work does not, by any means, think it incumbent upon him to anſwer the queſtions, and ſolve the difficulties which are propoſed in the courſe of it, he thinks it may be of ſome uſe to cloſe this part of the undertaking, with endeavouring to ſatisfy three of his correſpondents, whoſe queſtions are of ſome conſequence; and it will be the eaſier for him to do it, becauſe he finds, upon examination, that they are not altogether new.

A correſpondent, whoſe ſignature is Q. Vol. 2. p. 194. thinks that great ſervice would be done to the cauſe of chriſtianity, if a ſimple and clear proof

proof were given, that the three former goſpels, and the book of Acts, were written before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Now with reſpect to this, it may be obſerved, that we have all the evidence that is ever required in ſimilar caſes, viz. the unanimous teſtimony of thoſe who wrote neareſt to the times, in which thoſe books were publiſhed, and ſuch internal characters as are not liable to any ſuſpicion. It is highly probable, for inſtance, that Luke, who has given us ſo particular a hiſtory of the proceedings of the apoſtle Paul, would have given an account of his death alſo, if he had writen ſo late; but the laſt tranſaction which is mentioned in the book of Acts, is St. Paul's confinement at Rome, in the reign of Nero, A. D. 62, or 63; and his goſpel was evidently written before the book of Acts. Beſides, none of the early advocates of chriſtianity have ever mentioned the lateneſs of theſe publications; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that they would have omitted ſo obvious an argument of their want of authenticity. Can it be imagined, for inſtance, that the three former evangeliſts could have given ſo particular a prophecy, as they had done of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem *after the event*, and have eſcaped animadverſion. Luke's ſaying, by way of parentheſis, in his account of the ſigns which were to precede that cataſtrophe, *he that readeth let him underſtand*, very naturally intimates that, in his apprehenſion, ſome of thoſe ſigns were taking place, at the time of his writing, and ſeem to imply an admonition to all chriſtians, to give proper attention to them.

On

On the other hand, John, who confeſſedly wrote after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, has not recorded any of the prophecies relating to it, they having been ſufficiently mentioned by others, and being then accompliſhed.

Pyrrho, Vol. 2. p. 468. will probably find ſatisfaction with reſpect to his difficulty in Dr. Benſon's hiſtory of the planting of chriſtianity, Vol. 1. p. 203, ſecond edition. He there obſerves, that, in the ſecond century, Juſtin Martyr conſidered Damaſcus as belonging to Arabia, and therefore he thinks that, though the Romans conquered Damaſcus under Pompey, and there is no mention of its being reſtored; yet that Aretas, being ſtill king of Arabia, of which Damaſcus was a part, held that city, together with the reſt of his dominions as a dependent and tributary Prince.

I would inform our correſpondent N. F. Vol. 2. p. 472. that according to Dr. Lightfoot (ſee his works, Vol. 2. p. 400.) the Jews ſpeak of Mary as the daughter of Heli; and if ſo, Luke has given the proper and natural deſcent of Jeſus; whereas Matthew has given what the Jews, who judged by appearances, would have called his pedigree. Beſides, if we conſider the uſual ſtile and manner of writing genealogies among the Jews, we ſhall peceive that Luke did not mean to ſay that Joſeph was the ſon of Heli, but that Jeſus was deſcended from him. For Jeſus, as the ſame Dr. Lightfoot obſerves, is the proper antecedent to all the terms in the pedigree, even to the laſt, the *ſon of God.* In fact, therefore, the meaning of Luke is,

that

that Jeſus (who was the ſuppoſed ſon of Joſeph) was deſcended from Heli, from Matthat, from Levi, from Melchi, &c. and from God. This is not advanced without the authority of a ſimilar inſtance; for in Geneſis xxxvi. 2. Aholibamah, is called *the daughter of Anah*, the *daughter of Zibeon*; whereas, in fact, Anah was the *ſon* of Zibeon; and conſequently it is Aholibamah who is here called the daughter of Zibeon, as being deſcended from him. It is plain from verſe 24, 25. of the ſame chapter, that Anah was a *man*, the father of Aholibamah.

END OF VOLUME THE THIRD.

END OF VOLUME THE THIRD.